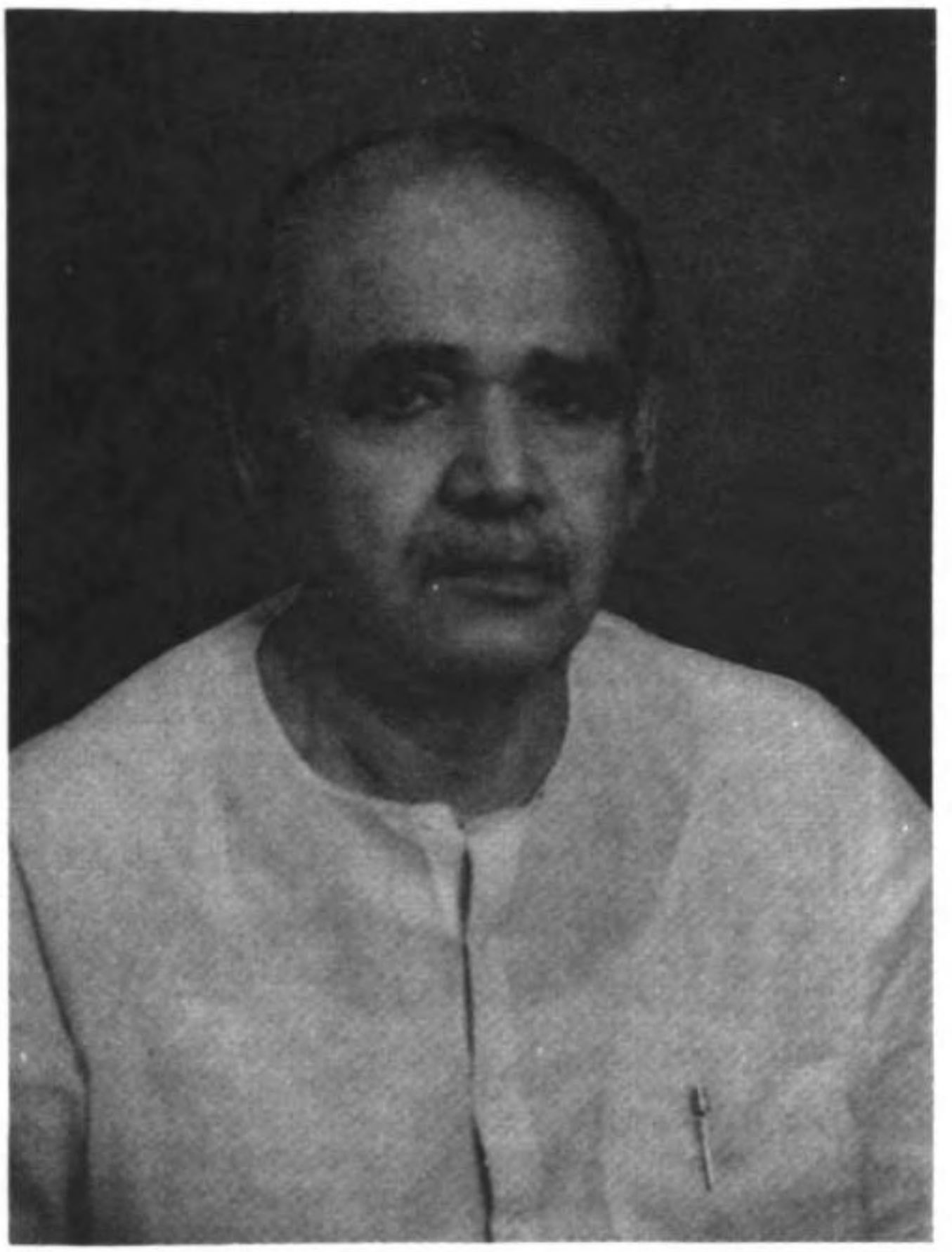
A doyen of Indian historians, Professor Ram Sharan Sharma (b.1919), through his extensive historical writings, has not only been combating the communalist, obscurantist and chauvinist elements in the country but has also continued to fight the subtle Western propaganda projecting a distorted image of India. Based on a combined use of textual, archaeological and numismatic evidence and on the information gathered from field work, Professor Sharma's researches have called into question the stereotype image of India and the myths which have gripped the minds of the people for long. Professor Sharma, without doubt, represents a distinct historiographical trend of profound radical scholarship which demystifies our past.

The present volume, a *festschrift* to Professor Ram Sharan Sharma, consists of research papers by eminent scholars who share, in varying degrees, his perception of historical developments and have stood by him in his battle against the obfuscation of India'a past. The papers relate to ancient, medieval and modern periods of Indian history and throw fresh light on the dynamics of socio-economic change and its ideological manifestations – a theme in which Professor Sharma himself has been deeply interested.

D.N. Jha, the editor of the present volume, is currently Professor of History at the University of Delhi.

Society and Ideology in India

Essays in Honour of Professor R.S. Sharma



Professor Ram Sharan Sharma

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D.N. Jha

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Preface

Some years ago friends, admirers and pupils of Professor R.S. Sharma decided to felicitate him on his birthday by presenting him a *festschrift*. But his birthday came and went and, as usually happens with collective academic ventures, the efforts in this direction took a long time to fructify. However, it has now been possible to bring together the essays contributed by different scholars including his former students, and to present them in the form of a thematic anthology to him and to the world of scholarship. Since the articles in the volume relate to different periods and aspects of Indian history in which Professor Sharma is interested, I have faced some difficulty in the appropriate use of diacritical marks. I crave the indulgence of the readers for any wrong use of diacriticals that might have crept in despite my best efforts.

I am grateful to the contributors to the volume, though I do not know how to express my sense of loss at the sad demise of Walter Ruben, Hitesranjan Sanyal and Diptendra Banerjee who most happily gave in their pieces but did not live to see them in print.

I place on record my sense of gratitude to my colleagues especially Professor K.M. Shrimali for his help and advice in planning the present volume. I owe a great debt to Dr C.M. Jha, Shri Bhuvan Sinha and Shri V.K. Jha who have always come to my rescue in moments of stress and strain. A formal thanks giving to my wife, Rajrani, would amount to belittling her role in course of the preparation of the volume. I am thankful to Shri Devendra Jain who was very eager to undertake the publication of the work and has expeditiously seen it through the press.

D.N. JHA

Delhi University
Delhi
1 May 1995

Abbreviations

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*
AICC	All India Congress Committee
Ā'īn	*Ā'īn-i Akbarī*
Ait. Br.	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*
AN	*Akbar Nāmā*
ARE	*Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*
ASS	*Aitihāsik Sankīrna Sāhitya*
BE	Bengali Era
Bh. P.	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*
BPPC	Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee
BR	*Bhakti-ratnākara*
Bvai. P.	*Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*
CB	*Chaitanya-bhāgavat*
CCLM	*Catalogue of Coins in the Provincial Museum, Lucknow*
CCIM	*Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*
CCPM	*Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum*
CEHI	*Cambridge Economic History of India*
Ch. Up.	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
CHB	*Comprehensive History of Bihar*
CICBM	*Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum*
Court	Court of Directors, East India Company
CWC	Congress Working Committee
DCC	District Congress Committee
EC	*Epigraphia Carnatica*
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*
Fin (Gen)	Financial Department, General Branch
Fin. Progs.	Financial Proceedings of G.G. in C
Fin. (Terr)	Financial Department, Territorial Branch
G.G.	Governor-General
G.G. in C	Governor-General in Council
IA	*Indian Antiquary*
IAR	*Indian Archaeology—A Review*
IC	*Indian Culture*
IHR	*Indian Historical Review*
INC	*Indian Numismatic Chronicle*

IESHR	*Indian Social and Economic History Review*
JASB	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
JBBRAS	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society*
JBRS	*Journal of Bihar Research Society*
Jedhe	*Kārī va Ambvāde Jedhe Deshmukh*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JNSI	*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
MASI	*Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*
Mbh.	*Mahābhārata*
MCM	A. Avineri, ed, *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernisation*
MEHSM	Karl Marx, "Excerpts from Henry Summer Maine" in Lawrence Krader, ed, *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*
MEJBP	Karl Marx, "Excerpts from John Budd Phear, *The Aryan Village*" in Lawrence Krader, ed, *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*
MEMMK	Excerpts from M.M. Kovalevsky in Lawrence Krader, *The Asiatic Mode of Production*
MESC	Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*
MIS	*Marāthyānchā Itihāsāchin Sādhanen*
MPP	Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*
NV	*Narottama Vilāsa*
NYDT	*New York Daily Tribune*
Oturkar	*Peshvākālīn Sāmājik va Ārthik Patravyavahār*
PCC	Pradesh Congress Committee
PIHC	*Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*
PK	*Sri Sri Pada-Kalpasaru*
POC	*Proceedings of the Oriental Conference*
RPP	Rajendra Prasad Papers
Śat. Br.	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SCS	*Shiva Charittra Sāhitya*
SII	*South Indian Inscriptions*
SPD	Selection from Peshwa Daftar
SSRPD	Selections from Satara Raja's and Peshwa's Diaries
TSV	Karl Marx, *Theory of Surplus Value*

Professor R.S. Sharma: A Profile

D.N. JHA

Professor Ram Sharan Sharma was born in a middle class family of Barauni village in Bihar on 1 September 1920. In the twenties there were not many schools in Bihar and often even the children from affluent families found it difficult to receive English education. But no difficulty was insurmountable for him and after completing his primary education in his village school he moved to Begusarai, then a small sub-divisional town in the district of Monghyr, where he completed his schooling in 1937. The same year he joined Patna College, Patna, as a student of the first year class and studied there for six years taking his Master's degree in History in 1943. After a brief stint as a lecturer in H.D. Jain College, Arrah and T.N.B. College, Bhagalpur (July 1944–November 1946), he joined Patna College as a lecturer. In 1958 Professor Sharma became the head of the department of history, Patna University, and continued to occupy that position till 1973 when the University of Delhi offered him professorship and the headship of its history department. A year earlier he had become the first Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi. He finally retired from Delhi University in 1985, though his retirement has had no adverse effect on his academic activity which has been going on ceaselessly.

Professor Sharma has had to face many odds in professional life but his robust optimism never allowed him to succumb to despair. In his youth he came in contact with peasant leaders like Karyanand Sharma and Sahajanand Saraswati and scholars like Rahul Sankrityayana and perhaps from them he imbibed the determination to fight for social justice and an abiding concern for the downtrodden which drew him to Marxist ideology. His later association with Dr Sachidanand Sinha, a social reformer and journalist, broadened his mental horizon and firmly rooted him in the reality of rural India and thus strengthened his ties with the left movement and brought him into the front rank of anti-imperialist and anti-communal intellectuals of the country.

Impatient with inefficiency and guided by his radicalism, Professor Sharma has been a great builder of institutions. Under his guidance the department of history, Patna University, drastically changed its syllabi and made a sharp departure from the communal and imperialist historiographical legacy of the colonial period. He has the credit of activising the department which was suffering from an almost incurable inertia and of initiating academic programmes which gave a distinct character to the history department of Patna University and thereby bringing it into the vanguard of secular and scientific historiography. In Delhi where he spent a smaller part of his teaching career, Professor Sharma's achievements are no less significant. The development of the department of history, Delhi University, owes a great deal to the efforts of Professor Sharma who radicalized it by converting it into a citadel of secular and scientific history and waged an all out war against communalist historiography.

As heads of the department of history at Patna and Delhi universities, as Chairman of the ICHR, as an important member of the National Commission of the History of Sciences in India and UNESCO Commission on the history of Central Asian Civilizations and of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, and, above all, as a practising historian he has been influencing the major decisions relating to historical research in India and has continued his ceaseless fight for social justice and for secular and rational historical enquiry. It is largely because of his efforts that the largest body of professional Indian historians, the Indian History Congress, of which he was the General President in 1975 and which honoured him with H.K. Barpujari Award in 1989, has now become the symbol of secular and scientific approach to history. He himself has been a symbol of radical scholarship.

Professor R.S. Sharma, popularly known as RS among his friends and as Sharmaji among his pupils, has made seminal contributions in the field of early Indian history by applying Marxist method of analysis. In contrast to his predecessors who had focused their attention on the study of higher orders, he published his *Śudras in Ancient India* as early as 1958 and examined the relationship of the lower social orders with the means of production from the Vedic age up to the Gupta period. In the following year his *Aspects of Ancient Indian Political Ideas and Institutions,* apart from questioning the national chauvinist and revivalist approach of K.P. Jayaswal and others, emphasized the material basis of the power structure in ancient India, a point he has also stressed in his recent work *The Origin of State in India* (1990). In 1965 his *Indian Feudalism* posed a major problem as to whether India passed through the phase of feudalism. Four years later his *Social Changes in Early Medieval India,* being the first Dev Raj Chanana Memorial Lecture, brought into focus the changes in social structure that accompanied the origin and growth of feudalism in early India and in 1987 his *Urban Decay in India (c.300-1000)* drew attention to the overwhelming mass of archaeological evidence to demonstrate the decline of urban centres in early medieval period which reinforces his arguments regarding the genesis and growth of feudalism in India. In another work, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India* (1985), on which he worked as Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow, Professor Sharma has sought to unravel the process of class formation, and social implications of the material changes in the Vedic period and in the age of the Buddha on the basis of literary and archaeological sources. Thus Professor Sharma's researches cover the whole range of early Indian history and are largely summarized in his popular textbook *Ancient India* (1977) written for the National Council of Educational Research and Training. When this book was withdrawn under the pressure of obscurantist elements he launched an attack on them in his *In Defence of "Ancient India"* (1979) and the book was subsequently restored. In fact Professor Sharma's zeal in fighting the obscurantist, revivalist and communal approach to history is best seen in his role in the recent controversy centring round Ayodhya. His *Communal History and Rama's Ayodhya* (1990, revised edn 1992) exposes the hollowness of the claims of Vishwa Hindu Parishad and successfuly unmasks the political design

behind their arguments which has led to the obfuscation of Indian archaelogy and history.

In his writings Professor Sharma has focused on early Indian social structure, material and economic life, state formation and political ideas and the social context of religious ideologies and has sought to underline the historical processes which shaped Indian culture and civilization. In his study of each of these aspects of ancient Indian history he has laid stress on the elements of change and continuity. This has significantly conditioned his methodology which basically rests on a critical evaluation of sources and a correlation between literary texts with archaeology and ethnography. His methodology is being increasingly extended to the study of the various aspects of Indian history just as the problems studied by him and the questions raised by him have generated a bulk of historical literature in recent years. No professional historian has created such an impact on historical research during the last three decades or so as Professor Sharma. For nearly four decades he has strode in the field of early historical studies like a colossus and has demystified Indian history.

A man of courage, conviction, utter humility and a strong social commitment, Professor Sharma is as unassuming as indefatigable in his academic pursuits. Full of compassion, he has been a constant source of inspiration to his pupils and other younger scholars. While he has been all warmth to his friends, he is extremely decent and generous to his detractors. His qualities of head and heart make him a truly great man. We feel proud in felicitating him by offering the present volume to him. By honouring him we are upholding the values he stands for.

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1

The Aryan Invasion of Indus Cities: Evidence and Assumptions

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The understanding ot historical processes in early India has often been constrained by certain ideas and formulations which seem to derive from an inadequate view of textual information or laboured correlations of literary and archaeological data. One is accustomed to hearing, for instance, that the Vedic Aryans entered India in two waves, that the family books of the *Ṛgveda* can be treated as a homogeneous document representing the same level of social development or that the Ṛgvedic and later Vedic periods marked two stereotyped social formations, one pastoral nomadic and the other agrarian. Another generalization of this category presupposes that the Ṛgvedic *pur* represents Harappan cities and that the destruction of these cities by hordes of Aryan nomads led to the decline of Indus civilization. Though most of these formulations would call for fresh research[1] some are obvious fallacies, which, instead of being dispensed with, find recurrent mention in scholarly writings.

The idea of Aryan invasion of Indus cities hinges on the equation of Ṛgvedic *pur* with Harappan cities, four groups of unburied skeletons from an intermediate level at Mohenjo-daro, the tentative identification of Cemetery H culture at Harappa as Aryan. Yet another plank of the invasion theory relates to the finds of shafthole axe-adzes which led some enthusiasts to suggest the presence of war-like Aryan hordes on the Indo-Pak borderland. The suggested identification of Ṛgvedic Hariyūpīyā with Harappa may also be mentioned in this connection.

The whole exercise began with the discovery of Harappan cities in the early 1920s. As work progressed in different sites attempts were made to account for the decline of this extensive civilization. The devastation would be the work of a quake, an unknown epidemic, the action of annual inundation or an external attack. Of these the last one seemed to appeal most with floods following as a close second factor at Mohenjo-daro.

At this point we may focus attention on the invasion theory which despite inherent contradictions revealed by literary and archaeological data, has exercised gripping influence on the minds of archaeologists, Vedicists and historians. Perhaps text-based Vedic archaeology is at its worst when archaeologists speak of Aryan destruction of Harappan cities. This is an articulation which helps neither the archaeological record of the earliest Vedic-speakers of India nor explains the decay of Indus cities. The idea of some

armed outsiders marauding Indus cities and launching man-slaughter derived from the four groups of unburied skeletons found from as many uncharacteristic places in the late levels of occupation at Mohenjo-daro. The suspicion deepens as one observes that the skeletons comprised men, women and children in strangely huddled up positions. This could be the work of a quake, a deluge or an attack by outsiders such as depredators from neighbouring Baluch hill-tracts. Of these the last one got off despite disagreement among the excavators themselves.

Marshall[2] was willing to favour the role of outsiders but Hargreaves[3] has his own reasons to differ. The high-burnt outer wall of citadel at Harappa and a group of over twenty tightly-packed skulls from Area G, also at Harappa, enthused scholars to believe that the attack was not confined to Mohenjo-daro and it swept other far-off centres as well.

Although the possibility of an external attack was still a matter of debate, a strong suggestion was mooted that the invaders of Indus cities were none else but the Vedic Aryans.[4] The scholar was no other than V. Gordon Childe whose reputation often buttressed his ideas and opinions. In this case too, the articulation lent considerable respectability to a suspect idea and even encouraged other investigators to promote it.

By this time, investigators were already looking into the earliest literary record of India which alone seemed to coincide, if at all, with the final phase of Harappan occupation. Attempts were made to explore interactions between Indus and Vedic civilizations.[5] This was soon followed by a tentative identification of Harappa with Hariyūpīyā,[6] mentioned in the sixth book of the *Ṛgveda*. The concerned passages describe a fierce fight which took place on the eastern bank of Hariyūpīyā. The encounter which locked up a local chief named Vṛcīvanta and Avyavartin Cāyamāna, a protégé of Indra, ended in the defeat of Vṛcīvanta and his 130 mailed troops.

The immediate cause of this conflict was the anti-Vedic dispensation of Vṛcīvanta who used to despoil sacrifices by breaking the ritual pots. Though the battle was fought on the eastern bank of Hariyūpīyā (*hariyūpīyāyām han pūrve*), the Vṛcīvantas lived on either side of Hariyūpīyā. This is clear from the fact that a senior member of the Vṛcīvanta family was frightened to death on the western side of Hariyūpīyā (*bhiyasā apara dart*) following the disaster on the eastern bank.

The reference to the eastern and western sides of Hariyūpīyā would suggest that Hariyūpīyā was a river which may have flowed past the scene of the battle, not necessarily Harappa. More importantly, there is no mention in an otherwise elaborate description of war, of *pur*-like structure or its demolition. This would have been most appropriate in view of the great citadel at Harappa particularly its high-burnt wall which could be paraded as the sure proof of an invasion. Further, the meagre 130 mailed troops (*tṛncchat varminaḥ*) who lost to Cāyamāna would be a little too inadequate for the defence requirements of a large city like Harappa.

The Aryan identity of the so-called marauders of Indus cities gained further strength with the discovery of Cemetery H at Harappa. The detailed work of Vats (1940)[7] underlined the presence of a new people with a distinct ceramic typology and equally distinctive funerary habits closely resembling those described in the funerary hymns of the *Ṛgveda*. Vats was close to identifying Cemetery H people with one at least of the numerous groups of Vedic-speakers which streamed into the subcontinent. But the hunch that the earliest Vedic-speakers or rather the earliest ancestors of the Hindus, could not but cremate the dead, left Vats undecided.

Though Vats remained undecided, Wheeler (1946)[8] was willing to risk conjectures. He seems to have accepted the suggested identification of Vats as final and quickly returned to his own idea of great massacre at Mohenjo-daro. He made a quandary conflation of disparate bardic accounts relating to separate groups of Vedic-speakers and their detractors widely separated by time and territory to suggest that destruction of *pur* in the *Ṛgveda* cannot but represent the destruction of Harappan fortifications by Vedic-speaking people and the detractors killed by Indra were none else than the Harappans.

Wheeler made a special reference to the fight between Indra and Sambara and the destruction of the latter's 99 'fortresses' little realizing that the episode is assigned to a high mountainous region where Indra spent forty long years in pursuit of Sambara.[9] So far, there has been no suggestion of any Indus cities being situated on hill-tops.

Hopefully, Wheeler equated *pur* with a fort and not town or city though he would not mind if these represented Harappan citadels. Wheeler also raked up the West Asian connections of the Vedic-speaking 'invaders' on the basis of stray finds of copper and bronze objects. In the mid-forties and even later this reconstruction of the 'invasion myth' looked too attractive and palatable to evoke criticism. Later articulations by Stuart Piggott (1950)[10] and D.H. Gordon (1958)[11] added strength to Wheeler's hypothesis which appeared to be developing into an article of faith for archaeologists and historians.

We might observe that the main planks of the hypothetical Aryan invasion of India relate to stray finds of copper and bronze objects with West Asian affinity, an equation of the Ṛgvedic *pur* with Harappan cities and the Harappan identity of the enemies killed by Indra, besides the physical presence of the invaders in certain places of Harappan association suggested on the basis of Cemetery H. Of this the stray finds of copper and bronze objects would appear to be more West Asian than Ṛgvedic. Clearly, the idea derives from the organic connection between West Asia and Indo-Aryans and even presupposes that the Ṛgvedic people were at the same level of social development as the people represented by rich archaeological deposits of their supposed West Asiatic fraternities. If this were so, the archaeological remains of the earliest Vedic-speakers would not have been elusive so long. Further, if these artifacts were part and parcel of the Ṛgvedic tool-kit, these should also be forthcoming from northern Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana and not remain confined to a few sites in the Indo-Pak borderland.

Oblivious of all this, Allchin and Allchin (1968)[12] made a vigorous attempt to refurbish the invasion myth as is evident from one of the chapter-headings of their book. They again draw upon the stray finds of copper and bronze objects with West Asian affinities. The articulation does not go beyond adding up to the list prepared by Wheeler notably those from Swat region. Once again the material remains are confined to the Indo-Pak borderland which would be well within the ambit of the eastern trade of Iran and the Iranian manufactory of copper-bronze artifacts.

Looking up the bardic accounts of nuclear groups one would be hard put to it to identify parallels of the archaeological finds of copper and bronze objects such as the shafthole axe-adze, spiral-headed pins and so forth. The *paraśu* may represent an axe but not necessarily one made of copper. The two cutting tools which may have been made of copper or bronze, one a carpenter's tool (*vāśiṁ āyasīṁ*) and the other an axe (*paraśuṁ suāyasam*), may encourage enthusiasts. But both passages are found in the tenth book which Vedicists assign to the fag-end of the Ṛgvedic age. Coinciding, as the tenth book does, with the beginnings of iron age in India, the possibility of these being made of iron cannot be ruled out.

More importantly, *paraśu* is neither a hunting nor a fighting tool in the *Ṛgveda*. All that it represents is a woodcutter's implement. As opposed to this the sword (*asi*) and arrowfitted with a copper-head (*ayomukha iṣu*) would be more relevant archaeologically. One may also look for the reaping-tools such as *sṛṇi* and *dātra*. Since both were made of either stone or metal, the chances of their survival in association with stray finds of copper and bronze objects would be considerable. But so far nothing of this sort has been reported.

One may also question the bardic testimony of metallurgical expertise of the marginal groups of hunting-herding nomads. Some of these nuclear groups such as the one represented in the fourth book could obtain metal goods in exchange for cattle. They could even obtain metal ingots and fashion the required tools and implements. But very large incidence of metal-use would call for metal forging techniques such as smelting, metal casting, cold work, annealing and even mining technology of which there is no suggestion in the bardic compositions. The terms *dhamati* and *dhmāta*, which derive from the root *dhmā* (to blow, to bellow), occur in certain passages. Probably, this underlines the bardic knowledge, and not the actual practice of smelting with the help of a blow-pipe generally used by copper-smiths. The bellows which has a distinct to and fro action and could not therefore have escaped bardic simile, however, seems unlikely.

The other main plank of the invasion hypothesis relates to four groups of unburied skeletons at Mohenjo-daro, which were projected as the victims of a man-slaughter launched by Indra who also allegedly destroyed the fortified Indus settlements. The idea has two components, the massacre of an urban population presumably Harappans and the destruction of cities inhabited by them. This would surely match certain Ṛgvedic passages in which Indra razed the *pur*-settlements and killed those who lived in these places.

Of the latter allegation no structural evidence is forthcoming from any of the Indus cities and need not therefore detain us. The 'massacre' idea which took off from a superficial co-relation of the killing of detractors by Indra with skeletal remains of uncertain date is hardly any more convincing. Surprisingly the whole emphasis of massacre theory is based on a detour of the observations made by the excavators themselves. The main weakness of the assumption is that the killings, if any, were not the result of a single tragedy and that the skeletons were either posterior to the final phase of occupation at Mohenjo-daro or belonged to the intermediate stage preceding the final phase of occupation. In the first case the victims of Indra, if at all, would be post-Harappan villagers and not Harappan citizens. In the latter event the victims would be inaccessible to any of the earlier Vedic-speakers of India. Dales (1966)[13] who takes good care of these details seems justified in dismissing the alleged massacre as mythical though it would be a tall order to ask for the archaeological remains of broken chariots, smashed fortresses and the weapons and skeletons of the attackers and the defenders. Matching Wheeler's dramatic 'conviction' of Indra on circumstantial evidence Dales pronounces 'acquittal' after a re- examination of the same circumstantial evidence which in this case amounts to laying bare the archaeological constraints of the massacre theme.

The archaeological data not obliging the promoters of invasion myth, one may turn to the text itself to ascertain from separate and frequently unrelated groups of bardic composers for new perspectives and formulations. The issues which await attention are: whether the term *pur* can, represent any urban places in general and Harappan cities in particular? Who built the *pur*? Who razed these down and how, and also where could these be situated?

In the first place too much optimism in equating the Ṛgvedic *pur* with town would seem unnecessary. One of the lexical meanings of the term is town. But it also means a castle, a fortress, a fortified place, a stronghold and even a wall. The underlying idea of each one of these terms, except perhaps the wall, is a strongly-built dwelling-place. Compared to this, a town would be an aggregate of such living places integrated by urban values. Not much exercise would be needed to argue that the former preceded the latter. The lexical works which post-date all of this cannot be expected to distinguish between the earlier and later connotations of a word. It would be another matter if, for certain imaginary reasons, the investigator prefers to put the cart before the horse and asks it to move as well.

The Pur-Town Paradigm

As for the bardic testimony of hymns there is nothing which might represent a city of the dimension of Mohenjo-daro, Harappa or Kalibangan. The terms *ūrvī* (broad) and *pṛthvī* (wide) do not mean much. The column or the colonnade does not appear as such an integral member of Harappan architecture to call for the expression 'many- armed' or 'many-pillared' (*śatabhujī*). Nor does stone appear as an essential building material to justify the adjective 'stone-made' (*aśmamayī*). The several broad streets intersecting a Harappan city into

rectangular blocks and brick-paved drains running along these streets find no place in the bizarre march of bardic similes and metaphors. The *mahaspatha* (main road) which led the seven Angira hunter-lifters to the coveted cattle-enclosures of Paṇis in a high mountain country cannot obviously have anything to do with the thoroughfares of Harappan cities. Similarly, the mud-brick or mud-houses which may derive from the expressions *āmā* and *dehi* would be nowhere near the massive masonry structures of Harappan cities.

In all likelihood the Vedic-speakers never came across any cities and city-dwellers. For one thing nomadic cattle-keepers may, as a matter of habit and expediency, keep off the urban settlements and take to difficult lonely routes. The time-frame assigned to the text of the *Ṛgveda* may or may not coincide with some urban places in Central Asia. But there would be none in the Indo-Pak border land, the vale of Kashmir, the plains of the Indus and its eastern tributaries.

One must not also forget that all episodes of *pur*-destruction relate to named chiefs of the aboriginals, some of whom were pastoral hill-dwellers, some seasonal pastoral nomads and some nomads of the desert tracts. If *puraḥ* means towns, these would have to be assigned to some of these uncharacteristic regions. More importantly, each of the aboriginal chiefs would have to be associated with either a territorial state spaced by a large number of towns or a cluster of city-states. Mercifully, there are no takers of this idea so far.

There can be no takers either for the omnibus Purandara demolishing large number of towns belonging to each one of these aboriginal chiefs, for the gap between the destructive capability of small groups of hunters-herders and the relative invincibility of masonry brick structures characterizing a town or city must not be too large to look fanciful. Considering that the demolition devices constituted either the *vajra*, a weapon of indeterminate character or flaming stone missiles, even single structures of brick masonry would outmatch almost every group of nomadic attackers. As such what seems to fall within the destructive range of certain groups of Vedic-speakers would be thatched mud-houses with or without stone enclosures and not towns with structures of brick masonry. A timber structure can surely be burnt down by a flaming missile and mud- houses cracked or pulled down. The terms *āmā (āmāṣu puru)* and *dehi* which occur in stray passages of the *Ṛgveda* may well suggest aboriginal dwelling-places of this kind.

At this point one may also look up the various terms which denote demolition of *pur* in the *Ṛgveda*. These include *dart* (from *dṛ*, crack), *bhet* or *vibhet* (from *bhid*, break), *śisnathat* (from *śnath*, pierce) and *atārīt* (from *tṛ*, go over). *Atārīt* may simply suggest that the attackers went past the *pur*-dwellings of aboriginals. *Śisnathat* would, on the other hand, relate to certain Vedic-speakers forcing their entry into the *pur*-houses by breaking open the doors and terrorising the inmates. The remaining expressions seem to suggest splitting or pulling down of the *pur*-houses. But there is no indication of how all this was done.

Leaving these incongruities and possibilities to take care of themselves we may now turn to the various declensions of the term and the contexts in which

these occur in the *Ṛgveda*. The more important of these are the accusative *puraṁ*, the genitive *puraḥ* (singular) or *purām* (plural) and the locative *puri* (singular). In one hymn of the eighth book Indra is said to have made dust of the moving house of a detractor (*tvaṁ puraṁ cariṣṇavaṁ* ...).[14] The expression *puraṁ cariṣṇavaṁ* may remind us of the Scythic speakers of Central Asia who, together with their horses and tent-houses traversed the whole area from Syr Darya-trans-Oxiana in the north-east to the eastern shores of Caspian in the south-west. The portable dwellings again surface in a hymn of the seventh book which compares the Sarasvati with a house *(āyasī puḥ)*.[15] The adjective *āyasī* may represent a strongly built house. It may also suggest a copper-colour slip applied to some prominent part of such portable structures. A town with masonry structures seems well beyond reckoning in both these passages. The accusative *puraṁ* also figures in the seventh book where the bard draws a parallel between Indra breaking open the cow-stalls (*vraja*)[16] and stables of Pipru and Indra breaking down the dwelling- places of enemies (*puraṁ*).

The *pur-vraja* equation would surely put a town or city out of reckoning; for one thing what a shambles of a town it would be which needs comparison with a cattle-halt. More importantly, the gap between a cattle-home and a home for humans would be as marginal among the primitive pastoral nomads as among the traditional rural societies of today. The structures which nomadic heroes are supposed to demolish must be commensurate with the bodily strength or the demolition devices of the latter. A rutting bull, as in the present instance, may easily tear open a thatch-roofed cattle-shed just as Indra tears open the wooden thatch-roofed house of his enemies.

The use of the locative *puri* which appears in a couple of hymns also rules out the *pur*-town parallelism in the *Ṛgveda*. In one passage of the ninth book, *soma* liquor is said to pass into the small- mouthed pots just as a man enters the house (*janaḥ na puri*).[17] What seems crucial in this simile is the likeness between the small mouth of the pot (*vārāṇi*) and narrow opening of the house. The several broad roads which give entry to a town would be too dissimilar for an effective simile.

The locative *puri* again surfaces in a hymn of the sixth book, which brackets the domestic fire, the guest arrived in the house, the son nourished in the house with the pleasure-giving and well-wishing sire in the house, also seems to dismiss the *pur*-town equation in the *Ṛgveda*.[18] In characteristic bardic diction the locative is used only in relation to the well-wishing old man in the house (*raṇvaḥ puri aiva jūryaḥ*). But the object of comparison is the domestic fire which is entertained like a guest (*priyaḥ naḥ atithiḥ*) and which is fit to be nourished like a son (*sūnuḥ na trayayāyyaḥ*). A guest may arrive in the town but the domestic fire must always relate to the house, a son must always be nourished in the house and the well-advising old man must always reside in the house. The adjective *raṇvaḥ* (agreeable, delightful) qualifies *jūryaḥ* (old man, sire) and the whole expression means like an agreeable old man in the house. Interestingly, the sixth *maṇḍala* gives two examples of a lineage-based social ordering determined by the seniority of age and experience, the present hymn

being one of them. Hopefully, there is not much organic relation between lineage-based nomadism and urban milieu.

The locative plural *pūrṣu*[19] which occurs in an invocation of Apāṁ Napāt is no less significant in the present context. The passage solicits protection from the non-giving (*arātayaḥ*) oppressors (*amṛṣyaṁ*) who live at some distance (*paraḥ*) in shanties *(āmāṣu pūrṣu).* Sāyaṇa who explains *āmāṣu pūrṣu* as raw waters probably on the basis of the association with Apāṁ Napāt or the grandson of water has surely mystified the passage and made it more unintelligible. For some who depend on the commentator this might even incarnate water-demons. Griffith seems to rescue the passage from mystification and explains *āmāṣu pūrṣu* as 'forts unwrought'. One may however question how the term raw-building materials *(āmā)* can qualify the invincibility of a 'fort'. Probably, shanties represented by mud-plastered houses of aboriginal detractors are suggested. This seems well supported by the expressions non-giving (*arātayaḥ*) and mischievous (*anṛtāni*).

What emerges from the above consideration is that the internal evidence of the bardic record does not lend credibility to the *pur*-town equation. What it lends to is a dwelling-place of considerable strength. This may lead one to consider what after all a *pur* looked like and, secondly, what justifies a new term to denote a house when there are already half a dozen words to serve this purpose.

As to the first question we may refer our readers to a separate study mentioned above. Here it would suffice to examine a hypothetical reconstruction by Wilhelm Rau.[20] According to Rau, the *pur* represented a frequently concentric and hastily erected temporary structure with stone or mud ramparts. The idea of concentric forts derives from the term *tripura* which occurs once in the eighth book. The idea of temporary constructions similarly derives from the word *śāradīḥ* which occurs twice, once in the sixth book and once in the first book and is based on the rendering 'autumnal'. We have discussed below the several possibilities of this expression. The term may mean autumnal, but 'autumnal' need not mean temporary. The difficulty with this reconstruction is its omnibus nature tending to encapsulate diverse data. We would show in the succeeding sections that the destructions of *pur* relate to disparate groups of aboriginals all of whom may not have followed a stereotype of dwellings though the structural firmness would be common to all. Moreover, Rau seems to play safe when he dismisses the possible survivals of these structures and puts the whole problem beyond any archaeological consideration. We have tried to show in the concluding part of this study that archaeological reconstruction of the *pur* may not be as impossible as Rau might think.

Puraḥ —The Model of Aboriginal Houses

We have already shown that there is no reason to use the term *puḥ* or *puraḥ* in the sense of 'town' and that in several contexts the word means a dwelling house of considerable strength. We have also underlined that it is because of the castle-like appearance of these dwellings that terms *puḥ* and *puraḥ* were coined

and used by the bardic composers in clear preference to half a dozen glosses for a dwelling-place. For a people who were giving shape to an up and coming language by pooling from different dialectal streams it would be but natural to assign semantic value to objects as according to the features of these objects. A place where men sat down to offer sacrifices lent itself to the term *sadana* (from *sīd*, sit) just as a place which received gatherings of nomadic forays lent itself to the term *gṛha* (from *grah*, receive). Similarly, *kṣaya* would be a place full of possessions (from *kṣi*, possess) and *chardis*, more correctly *chadis* would be a place with thatched roof (*chad*, thatched roof). None of these terms for 'house' would qualify a strongly-built castle-like house justifying thereby the coinage of an altogether new term, *pur*.

The term *pur* and its several declensions occur in about 85 passages of the *Ṛgveda*. In many of these, the indistinct context renders the meaning difficult. Where the context is clear the term invariably means a dwelling-place of great strength and perhaps never a town. A diligent reader of these passages would be quick to recognize that the episodes relating to destruction of *pur* or *puraḥ* are always associated with one or the other of aboriginal chiefs.

One should not also forget that the term *pūḥ* means to cleanse which would be the whole effect of the demolition of the enemy houses and driving away of the *dasyus*. Contexts such as these highlight the association of aboriginal people with a particular system of house construction which was unknown to nomadic Vedic-speakers who seem to have been greatly impressed by the inbuilt strength and durability of these dwellings. No wonder if the nomads, after reducing many such houses, themselves aspired to build similar dwellings. An echo of this desire can be heard in the prayer for a hundred-armed strongly-built house.[21] In a passage of the eighth book Indra is urged to become strong in the fight and auspicious like the house (*pūḥ asi bhadrā*).[22] Evidently by the time of the eighth book, portions of which contain much late material, the *pur* model of house had become the symbol of welfare and auspiciousness. Whether the nomads actually built castle-houses or not cannot be ascertained. But the model continued to inspire the bards with *pur* becoming regular and just another term for house.

Who Built the Puraḥ?

Each one of the aboriginal chiefs whose houses were broken by Indra relates to disparate groups of Aryan rivals represented in separate *maṇḍalas* and to different geographical areas. As such the passages which bracket all of them as the victims of Indra need to be carefully differentiated in any historical account of encounters between Vedic-speaking nomads and non-Vedic speaking aboriginals. Historically viewed, the Sambara episode would be exclusive to the vale of Kashmir and the second *maṇḍala*. Similarly, the Suṣṇa episode would be exclusive to desert tracts of Central Asia and a section of Kaṇva nomads in the eighth and first books.

One needs however to allow for bardic hyperbole which made the houses of the aboriginals look several times stronger than these actually may have been. For this alone would justify the super-human strength of a divinized nomadic

hero such as Indra or Bṛhaspati. One needs also to guard against the bardic habit of mixing-up the various accounts of nomadic encounter which relate to disparate groups, geographical regions and spaces of time.

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2

Ideology and the Upanisads

ROMILA THAPAR

The reconstruction of the social and economic history of early India having become an established facet of the discipline, it is feasible for historians to include in their study the analysis of ideology in early society. There has lately been a debate on the placing of ideology in society. Some have defined it as a superstructure linked to the socio-economic base, as socially determined thought. Others have maintained that it is integrated into the larger whole in a way where, at times, ideology may be a catalyst or at any rate so enmeshed as to make its distinct discernment somewhat problematical. This is not a repetition of the Weber versus Marx debate, since there has been a considerable refinement of the concept of ideology in recent years.[1] For the purposes of this paper it is assumed that ideology is not a pale reflection of reality perched on the summit of the superstructure but (if one is permitted to modify Lukacs) can in certain circumstances become a driving force of history. It also assumes, as argued by Gramsci, that there is such a thing as 'cultural hegemony' where the ideology of a dominant group comes to be accepted by lesser social groups in society without either of them being overtly aware of this. And further, that when there is a lack of fit between ideology and its affiliation to dominant social groups then there is a potential for social change.

This paper attempts to look at the problem with reference to the first millennium BC in a concern with what might be called the watershed situation as reflected in the Upaniṣadic texts,[2] where the centrality of the sacrificial ritual was conceded as an act of society, but at the same time was doubted as the sole means of self-realization. These doubts had an almost logical culmination in a variety of new belief systems and ritual practices, as e.g., that of Buddhism. It is not incidental that it arose at this time because with the waning of the power of tradition, ideas were opened to challenge and began to compete. It has in the past been argued that these early philosophical speculations spring from the two cultures of the Indo- European and the pre-Aryan Indian.[3] This may to a limited extent be so. But it is incidental to more fundamental social changes which had to do with features not necessarily deriving from either of the two cultures.

The centrality of the sacrificial ritual has tended to be dismissed by historians of this period since it is seen primarily as an articulation of the religious sphere. To sacrifice is to "make holy". The word *yajña* from the root *yaj*, to worship, to consecrate, carries the same meaning of converting the profane into the sacred. The process establishes a union between the human and the divine and this in a

sense is a forerunner of one of the essentials of Upaniṣadic thought, namely, the link between the human and that which is beyond, the *Ātman* and the *Brahman*. The sacrificial ritual involves conciliation which is achieved through the death of the victim expiating evil; communion, where eating the victim sanctifies the consumer; and honorific offerings consisting of first fruits and gifts.[4] The Buddhists were contemptuous of the sacrificial ritual as being futile, incapable of providing effective spiritual benefits, cruel to animals and easy to nullify by power acquired through meditation or resort to the miraculous as is said to have been repeatedly demonstrated by the Buddha.[5]

The sacrificial ritual is the central ritual in the Vedic texts. To the extent that this ritual dominated the social activities of people as indicated by the texts, the historian must analyse the social meaning of sacrifice to such a society in order to understand why it became a pivotal concern in the *Upaniṣads*. Given the absence of burials in the Ganges valley culture, the utilization of wealth concentrated on the ritual of sacrifice. Such wealth was also tied to the notion of status. The ritual therefore is at one level a religious expression, at another the statement of status on the part of the *yajamāna* and, and at a third level, a demonstration of wealth and resources.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* contains an elaborate description of the various sacrificial rituals. Among these are the shorter seasonal rituals such as the *āgrāyaṇa iṣṭi* (offerings of the first fruits), *darśapūrṇamāsa iṣṭi, cāturmāsyāni, piṇḍapitṛyajña*; the special *soma* sacrifices of which the *agniṣṭoma* is often mentioned in other sources; the long rituals for prosperity such as the *agnicayana* and various *sattras*; funeral rituals; the *pravargya* sacrifices and the elaborate "royal sacrifices" where the *yajamāna* was the *rājā* and the ritual had to do with his consecration, conquest and claim over territory and rejuvenation as in the *abhiṣecanîya*, *rājasūya*, *aśvamedha* and *vājapeya* rituals which intermittently lasted for a period of years.

The ritual involves the death of a living being either actually or symbolically and includes gift offerings, consecration and sacred food and drink. Sacrifice means the surrender of something valuable but in the expectation of greater gain. The individual and the community value that which is given up. If it is livestock then the expectation is that of greater fertility of the herd and this in turn meant greater numbers and therefore prosperity. The sacrificial ritual was also a rite through which there was a communication with gods and spirits. The status of the participants was also underlined through the ritual. The group periodically renews the sentiment which it has of itself and of its unity. It hinges on notions of power, force, energy in the philosophy of such cultures. There is therefore a multiplicity of ideas involved in the ritual.

The killing of the sacrificial victim required a special preparation. A location had to be purified and cordoned off since to kill outside this area was tantamount to murder. Within this space was the sacred enclosure, the *vedi*. The killing of the victim should not in any way act adversely on the *yajamāna* so that in the process of sacralization a start was made with the *yajamāna*.[6] One of the methods of purification was fasting, the *upavasatha*, which combined fasting

in the proximity of the area where the sacrificial fire was lit.[7] Fasting and asceticism were equivalent in some cases to a sacrificial ritual. Thus the germ of the change was contained in this sentiment. Added to this was the element of renunciation in the giving up of a victim or an offering. The period of purification being long it would exclude those who were essential to the daily activities of life and would require that only those who could set apart these activities or find substitutes for their activities, were eligible to be *yajamānas*. This together with the resources required for the ritual meant that only those with some wealth at their command could be *yajamānas*. At the conclusion of the rite the consuming of the sacrificial victim was shared in by the deities, priests and the *yajamāna*, once again setting these social categories apart.[8] The picking out of these essentials of the sacrificial ritual but placing them in a different context was characteristic of groups such as the Buddhists. The *uposatha/upavasatha* for the Buddhists was not the eve of the *soma* sacrifice but the first, eighth, fifteenth and twenty-third nights of the lunar month. On the fifteenth, the *dhamma* was expounded, the *pātimokkha* was recited and the *sila* vows were taken, the ritual of sacrifice being replaced by a different emphasis on restraint and ethical behaviour.[9]

The sacrificial ritual has also been described as a part of the gift-exchange system.[10] The distinction between an offering which may not be the same as an act of giving is suggested in the terms used in relation to Vedic sacrifices. The offering or the oblation is the *bali* deriving perhaps from the roots *bhṛ* or *hṛ* and meaning, "to bear" or "to carry". *Dāna*, on the other hand, is specifically the act of giving. It has been argued that even an offering is a species of gift because it is personal to the giver and is valued by him.[11] Whereas this is true of *dāna* it is not necessarily true of *bali*. The element of exchange is often absent in an offering whereas it is intrinsic to a gift. An offering, where it is a gift, implies an asymmetrical status relationship. Even if *bali* as an offering does not conform strictly to the role of a gift in a gift-exchange system, the *dāna* which was bestowed on the priests by the *rājā* would have functioned in this manner.[12] Thus there is a touch of renunciation involved in the giving up of something precious to be used in the ritual. The nature and the quality of renunciation changes in the subsequent period when there are a number of shifts in emphases. The notion of gift-exchange is also introduced into the ritual. Buddhism however emphasizes the importance of *dāna* directly. The giving is at some cost to the giver because normally what is given is a scarce resource which has alternative uses.[13] Thus the number of sacrificial rituals may be determined by the availability of such resources. The logic of the latter argument may indicate one of the reasons for lengthy rituals with an ample use of dairy produce but with a smaller destruction of livestock. It has been suggested that Buddhist hostility to animal sacrifice may have had to do with the decline of herding in the middle Ganges valley.[14]

The availability of resources affects attitudes towards the offering. In herding communities, and particularly among cattle herders, animals are not indiscriminately killed for food. There is often a prohibition on the eating of

such animals and the occasions for eating the flesh of these is specially marked out.[15] The eating of the meat of a particular animal is generally limited to the occasion of a sacrifice when the animal is offered as a victim, unless of course the animal dies a natural death after which it may be eaten. This was one way of conserving the herd. Vedic texts maintain that after the victim has been sacrificed, even if it be of the cattle family, its flesh can be eaten. There is the oft-quoted passage in which Yājñavalkya lists his preferences for tender cuts of beef.[16] Similar meat is served to honoured guests, the term *go-ghna*, the one for whom the cow is killed, being used for special guests.[17] In a cattle-herding society this was part of the notion of a gift, the assumption being that one would receive the same in return on a visit to the home of the guest, apart from the host being lauded as both generous and of noble status. That there was not a total prohibition on the eating of beef, but that it is specifically mentioned in the context of special occasions would suggest that the cow was valuable and therefore inviolate and not sacred and therefore inviolate.[18] The conservation of the herd required that a prohibition be placed on the indiscriminate killing of cattle for food which prohibition was sought to be strengthened through giving it a sacred sanction. There is a difference between an offering that can be destroyed and one that can be reserved and eaten after the sacrificial ritual has been completed. Thus *ghī* and milk were destroyed, the *ghī* being burnt in some of the more dramatic rites such as the *vasordhara*.[19] Animals of the edible kind were consumed after the ritual. That the conventions regarding cattle were not widely observed is evident from the remains at excavated sites. Cattle bones with marks indicating that the meat had been cut with knives or some sharp instrument are often found in the vicinity of hearths at Painted Grey Ware sites[20] (the archaeological culture generally equated with the Vedic texts). The incidence of such bones would suggest a higher consumption of beef than that available only from sacrificial rituals or the feasting of guests.

The gradual decline of a cattle economy as is suggested in the later Vedic texts meant the decrease in raids and skirmishes; hostilities developed into warfare on a larger scale with calculated violence. The synonymity of a warrior with the *rājā* gradually gave way to the *rājā* being associated with the management of land where agriculture superceded cattle herding. The kṣatriya became the one who had access to land. To continue to translate the term as "warrior" and attribute the characteristics of the warrior as the primary characteristics of the *rājā* fails to take account of a fundamental change in the ethos of kṣatriya society. The management of agricultural resources required not only the propitiation of a different set of deities but also a new ethic in which violence was to be subordinated. The emphasis on *ahiṃsā* was appropriate to this change. Agricultural resources could not be increased through "capturing" land, but through using labour on land and through investing wealth in land. The greater the investment of labour and wealth, the larger the return. The social distancing of potential groups as labour had to be created and socially legitimized. The return to a myth of origin involving a primeval sacrifice was used as early as in the *purusasūkta* hymn but the outcome of the sacrifice was

the assertion of a social hierarchy.[21] The functions associated with the four *varṇas* reflected the social distinction and reinforced it with a religious sanction.

Wealth had also to be accumulated if it was to be invested in the new resource of cultivated land. In the potlatch there is no capital accumulation. Wealth is distributed and although in each case a larger amount is given the increase is not regarded as an interest on the original but as a larger gift.[22] The objection to the sacrificial ritual when reiterated by an institution such as the *saṅgha* is conditioned by the attempt to control or receive gifts. *Dāna* is collected for the *saṅgha* and those that make the maximum donations are important to the *saṅgha* and are remembered in the texts, as was Jīvaka.[23] Gifts to an institution can play the role of commodities. Although the gift is not returned to the donor and only intangible merit—*puṇya*—is returned, the institution can use the gift as a source to be invested in its establishment.

When the means of subsistence was cattle and the productive group was the herding clan led by *rājanya*/kṣatriya warriors, the sacrificial ritual remained central. When the means of subsistence changed increasingly to land and agriculture with cultivators and eventually peasants as the productive groups organized around land-owning clans and later land-owning families, the centrality of the sacrificial ritual began to recede. However, since it articulated more than just a religious expression, it began to be replaced by many new aspects of social activity and religious articulation. In looking at the underlying features of exchange in society during the transition in the mid-first millennium BC in the Ganges valley, there is a move from a system drawing heavily on gift exchange to one which gradually establishes a redistributive structure to which is added an incipient market exchange. These changes were by no means divorced from those in speculative and religious thought.

Society as depicted in Vedic texts of the earlier part of the first millennium BC was characterized by *viś* and *rājanyas*.[24] Being primarily pastoral with a gradual change to agriculture, cattle-raiding and booty-capturing were major preoccupations. The superior lineages of the *rājanyas* who were eventually to become the land-owning elite increased their domination over the lesser lineages of the *viś*, who, through a system of prestations provided whatever wealth was unobtainable from booty and after the change to agriculture came to be the main support of the kṣatriya. Social distancing encouraged the crystallization of at least three systems of kinship and descent: brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaisyas, and those who were excluded, the śūdras. Each group performed services for the other and a hierarchy based on such services was evolved.

A successful raid encouraged the holding of a sacrificial ritual which would be hosted by the kṣatriya *yajamāna* (sacrifiant) and at which the brāhmaṇa priests ranging over many categories and each specializing in some aspect of the ritual, would act as intermediaries between the *yajamāna* and the gods, particularly those gods invoked at the ritual. The sacrifice was a prayer for fertility, victories, wealth (computed in cows, horses, chariots and gold) and general well-being. Elements of earlier shamanism were retained in the ritual:

the altar was often in the shape of an eagle; pebbles and stones with natural holes and cavities were essential and the sound of the *mantra* or verse carried its own magical power.[25] The Vedic sacrifice was thus not a parallel to the Semitic covenant between a man and his God.

The sacrificial ritual had more than a religious purpose. A spectacular ritual, extending over many days or even months added fame and glory to the *yajamāna* for, the greater the amount of wealth expended the higher would be the status of the *yajamāna*. In the mutual dependence of the kṣatriya and the brāhmaṇa the former acquired status and the latter wealth, for each such occasion ended with gift-giving to the priests in the form of tangible wealth. When the kṣatriya increased his authority and was regarded as a king rather than a mere chief, this dependence also increased. The brāhmaṇa now associated the kṣatriya with divinity thus enhancing his legitimacy to rule and in return the brāhmaṇa came to possess even greater wealth. The major source of the kṣatriya's wealth was now from the *viś* in the form of first fruits of the harvest and larger ritual prestations, described as the kṣatriya eats the *viś*.[26]

The sacrificial ritual therefore was to become a major point of controversy in the germination of new ideas as suggested by the evidence of the *Upaniṣads*. It would seem from these texts that a small proportion of the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas came to think about mortality and immortality— a question which also motivated the sacrificial ritual. The efficacy of the ritual as a means to individual salvation gradually came to be regarded as inadequate. Individual salvation was not the primary concern of the sacrificial ritual. *Mokṣa* becomes important in relation to the centrality of the concept of the *Ātman* and of rebirth. It lies enconced in a shift emphasizing the centrality of the individual. This is given further stress by the association of *prāṇa* or breath with the *Ātman*. What might be described as the Upaniṣadic breakthrough was developed by a small group who introduced the notion of the individual soul (*Ātman*) seeking union with the universal soul (*Brahman*) which was seen as the eventual form of salvation or *mokṣa*. *Ātman* is variously derived from the roots *an*–to breathe, *at*–to move, *va*–to blow, all suggestive characteristics of life and the individual self. *Brahman* from the root *bṛih*, expanding and evolving, is suggestive of that which is all-inclusive and which led perhaps to the notion of a universality which is both the source and the destination of the individual soul, an idea not alien to those who saw both time and life as cyclic. Etymologically *Brahman* has also been associated with power and magic–an association which may well have had its roots in shamanist sources. As to the definition of the *Ātman* and *Brahman* there is a continuous bipolarity. The *Ātman* can be larger than the entire world but it can also be smaller than a mustard seed or a grain of rice.[27] It remains therefore an abstraction. Salvation, it was argued, could be achieved better through *yoga* (bodily control) and *dhyāna* (meditation) than by the sacrificial ritual. An initial groping towards metempsychosis and the idea of the rebirth of the soul in another body and in accordance with the merits and otherwise of one's present existence (which was to develop into the theory of *karma* and *saṃsāra*) is also discernible although in a seminal form. The fuller discussion

of this in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, describes Yama, the god of death, in dialogue with Naciketas and the central question posed is that of *punar-mṛtyu* (the cycle of deaths) and curiously not of *punar-janma* (the cycle of births). The latter was to become the more frequent term in later texts. Conquest over death or over the repetition of deaths and its counterpart, immortality, provides a subtler difference in concern than does the idea of the termination of rebirth. The questioning of the sacrificial ritual and its replacement by *yoga* and *dhyāna* as well as by the secret doctrine[28] (as it is described in the texts) of the *Ātman* and the *Brahman*, has its own historical value given the role of the ritual in social and economic processes.

That it was a secret doctrine communicated only to the trusted few has its own interest. *Iti rahasyam iti upaniṣad*, suggests confidentiality. The element of secrecy is said to have emerged from the secret explanations of the ritual which are discussed in the *Āraṇyakas* and which grew independently of the ritual. These were the more speculative exercises and were doubtless germinal to the ideas of the Upaniṣads. Explicatory manuals were required possibly because of the incorporation of new rituals through the assimilation of new ethnic communities, where these rituals would have to be adjusted to the existing ones. New ideas may well have arisen in the course of such explanations. These would tend to be tied to the rituals until such time as the rituals were either gradually discarded or were openly refuted. Secrecy raises the curiosity of others once they suspect it but, above all, it binds those who are a party to the secret and perhaps encourages a feeling of superiority: they know that which others do not. The emphasis on secrecy also points to some apprehension regarding its widespread knowledge. This may have had something to do with its authors. These consisted of a few kṣatriyas, often from the fringe areas of the *Āryāvarta*, areas where the sacrificial ritual had declined and which were therefore described in Vedic literature as "impure lands" (*mleccha-deśa*).[29] But the kṣatriyas of these areas, it would seem, discoursed on this doctrine and taught it to a few selected brāhmaṇas. The more frequently mentioned of these kṣatriyas are Pravāhana Jaivali of the Pañcālas, Aśvapati Kaikeya, Hiraṇya-nābha of Kośala, Ajātaśatru of Kāśī and Janaka of Videha.[30] These kṣatriyas are described as teaching the brāhmaṇas and one of the early Upaniṣads states that Ajataśatru commenting on this says, that it is contrary to the usual procedure where the brāhmaṇa teaches the kṣatriya.[31] Possibly it was embarrassing to the brāhmaṇas in the early stages of the new doctrines to openly consider alternatives to the sacrificial ritual. The decline of the sacrificial ritual may have been due to the existence of other cults, such as the worship of ancestral tumuli and sacred enclosures and trees and the *stūpa* and *caitya* cults, some of which may have been earlier than the Vedic sacrificial ritual in these areas.

These kṣatriyas although not antagonistic to the sacrificial ritual were probably not too eager to enforce it. This may have derived from a questioning of the ritual but also secondarily from other considerations. The mutual dependence of the brāhmaṇa and kṣatriya for power and status could be broken if the sacrificial ritual was discontinued. The reality of power came increasingly

to be recognized as lying in access to resources and in some schools of thought the bestowal of divine attributes became more marginal. In any case wealth was necessary to obtaining legitimacy. However since wealth was consumed in the ritual and in gift-giving to the brāhmaṇas, the power of the kṣatriya was circumscribed. A direct assertion through controlling resources would be one way of conserving power. The 'impure lands' were located either in north-western India where major trade routes were to develop, or else in the middle Ganges valley. Claims to land ownership on the part of the kṣatriya families and the use of slaves and hired labour to work the land increased the resources at their command permitting accumulation of wealth and sharpening the stratification. Wealth, if it was not to be destroyed in the sacrificial ritual would be a realistic basis for actual power. The temptation to break away from the prestation economy would have been apparent. It is interesting that the new doctrine places a different emphasis on the kṣatriya. He is no longer the warrior boasting of heroic deeds and awaiting the heaven of Indra, for he is now also the owner of land, the weilder of power, asserting himself in a new role. The kṣatriya identity cut across geographical regions as also did the kṣatriya doctrine and its teachers who belonged as much to the Kekaya clan of the north-west as to the Videha of the middle Ganges valley.

The two social categories involved in the reciprocal relationship of the sacrificial ritual were the kṣatriyas and the brāhmaṇas. Uncertainty in the initial ranking of each in relation to the other and the interdependence of the two is clearly stated.[32] It is the same two who are now involved in the new doctrine. Thus, the control of what was to emanate from the new doctrine was monopolized by those who had earlier controlled the sacrifice. Janaka of Videha asks Yājñavalkya, when the latter comes to see him, whether he has come to obtain cattle or join in a discussion, to which Yājñavalkya replies that he has come for both purposes.[33] However, since the secret doctrine did not require a ritual which requisitioned resources, the relation of reciprocity was eroded. The boundaries of reciprocity as a system of exchange and control could not continue once the system began to change. If the analogy can be carried further (without sounding facetious) the subsequent redistributive economy found its ideological parallel in the transformation of the secret doctrine into a universal belief system and in the institutionalizing of its rituals in the form of a variety of *saṅghas*.

That some brāhmanas too were participants in these new doctrines requires an explanation. Some among them who go to the kṣatriyas to learn the new doctrine are described as *mahāśāla mahāśrotrīya* (the extremely wealthy and very learned).[34] Elsewhere *mahāśāla* is the epithet for brāhmaṇas who owned large acreages of cultivated land which they had received as gifts for the performance of major sacrifices, land having now become a category of wealth.[35] Were these brāhmaṇas also anxious to conserve their wealth which otherwise they would be expected to expend on *soma* sacrifices? Or does one look for a less mundane, even if partial, explanation? That there were some who doubted the efficacy of the ritual is evident from the earlier texts.[36] But such doubts were marginal at that time. Now they seem to have become more central.

Part of the answer may lie in the early texts being aimed at propitiating the gods, whereas now the aim was to comprehend reality—a distinctly different activity. However, not all the brāhmaṇas interested in the new doctrine were *mahāśāla*, some were those who had set up hermitages in the forests, where, surrounded by their disciples, their concern was to try and unfathom the nature of reality, of mortality and immortality. Not that such brāhmanas were averse to wealth.[37] The fees that were charged for teaching the new doctrine could be substantial and reference is made to gifts of upto a thousand cows, gold, horses, *dāsīs*, chariots, elephants and land. Nevertheless, there were others who received pupils and taught them free of a fee and passed on their knowledge to them if they felt that the disciple was capable of comprehending it. The latter were among the early groups who opted out of society and sought a distance from social concerns. Their predecessors were the *munis* and *rsis*.

The *munis* not only broke away from social obligations but also claimed extraordinary powers. They are referred to as the long haired ones flying through the air, suggestive of shamans.[38] Elements of shamanism are reinforced in the new doctrine. An early text refers to the soul remaining in plants.[39] In the Upaniṣads the soul is described as going through the air which opens out like the hole in the chariot wheel and then it goes to the sun and the moon which open out like apertures in musical instruments.[40] In another passage the soul travels through space, air, cloud, rain, crops and finally lodges in plants where it is eaten and thus reborn,[41] reminiscent of shamanic descriptions of the journeying of the soul. It is interesting that the cycle is an agricultural one. As a shamanistic group they were the forerunners of the renouncers and ascetics. Their techniques involved the demonstration of bodily and mental powers and their theories were in part concerned with the voyaging of the soul. The notion of *Brahman* also carries a shamanic trace inasmuch as it is associated with *brahma*, a magical power, equated by some with *mana*. The sheer secrecy of the doctrine handed down from the teacher to a specially selected pupil and not revealed publicly and the fact that it derives from knowledge obtained through the human senses, by intuition, bodily control and meditation, is suggestive of shamanistic techniques. To this may be added other characteristics: the lengthy period of training, fasting and solitude, the need to have a teacher who initiates and guides the acolyte, not to mention the ultimate goal of the soul entering into communion with the divine. The description of the journey to the world of Brahma is a complex picture of many heavens and crossings involving deities, which is evidently an attempt to reconcile the notion of heaven with the abstract notion of *Brahman*, but carries in the description the influence of shamanism.

The social context of the new doctrine is again different from that of sacrifice: whereas the sacrifice required not only the presence of the clan but also the participation of the clan, be it the priests performing the ritual, or the *rājās* as *yajamānas* or the *viś* who brought the prestations, the new doctrine required a distance from social obligations whether of family or of clan. The emphasis shifted dramatically from the clan to the individual, a shift which was symptomatic of some of the anomie of changing social relations. The soul was

that of the individual and *mokṣa* was an individual concern. The term *Ātman* in itself encapsulates individuality.[42] The sacrifice could not be conducted in the absence of the clan: the comprehension of the *Ātman-Brahman* relationship was impossible in the presence of the clan, since it grew out of *yoga* and *dhyāna*.[43] It required neither intermediaries nor deities. The uncertainty of one's status after rebirth was in itself a departure from a hierarchical view of the future. The distancing from social obligation is also evident in the implied irrelevance of *varṇa* status in the new doctrine. The story of Satyakāma who, wishing to become a disciple of a teacher is asked to identify his caste, replies truthfully that he does not know his father and his mother is of low caste.[44] He is accepted. Even if it is argued that the fact of his speaking truthfully is taken as an indication of high caste, nevertheless he was born low by the rules of *varṇa* and should have been treated as of a low caste. The caste of the individual, it was implied, was unimportant in the search for salvation. It is not status that is crucial to immortality or rebirth, but one's actions. There is here again a germinal idea towards a universal ethic which was to be taken up by later teachers. But this germinal idea also prevented the notion of negating caste in daily life: the negation only applied to those who lived in hermitages at a distance from society.

These speculations inevitably had an impact on theories of knowledge. Not only was knowledge more important than ritual but it had its own reward, such as the discovery of the concept of immortality.[45] The introduction of doubt and investigation was a departure from the sacrificial tradition which was obsessed with the correct interpretation of ritual actions in a form which hardly encouraged wide-ranging speculations. The new theories on *punar-mṛtyu* and *Ātman-Brahman* grew out of a process of reasoning and were explained through a series of empirical similarities and analyses.[46] The debate on logic (*vākovākya*) did have its origins in sacrificial ritual but was extended via the new theories which came to refer to it as *tarkaśāstra*. These new techniques travelled long distances carried by the *carakas* and *parivrājakas*, terms earlier associated with pastoral nomads but now with the wandering teachers going from one settlement to another, and who were met with even more frequently in the parks and groves on the edges of the new urban centres. The repeated reference to groves makes one wonder whether some of the mysticism involved in the worship of sacred groves did not find its way into Upaniṣadic thought. It is unlikely that those who founded major schools of new thinking were unfamiliar with many of these ideas. The later *Maitri Upaniṣad*,[47] in a spirit quite alien to the earlier Upaniṣads, castigates these teachers as a hindrance to knowledge, presumably referring to their complete openness to question and to analyse. It includes them together with the śūdra teachers and those who wore the red robe and who attack the Vedas through juggling false arguments. It adds sternly that a brāhmaṇa should not study what is not included in the Vedas! Clearly the birth of heterodoxy had taken place.

Among the major sects associated with the emergence of heterodoxy was the one founded by the Buddha. It has been argued that some Buddhist doctrine

grew out of seminal ideas from the Upaniṣads.[48] This is in part true, but this argument is also an attempt to trace all philosophical and ethical traditions back to the Upaniṣads as a mechanism of appropriating heterodoxy should it become necessary. Significantly the Buddha does refer to these earlier teachers but is equally clear that his teaching is a departure from them. The nature of the difference can be seen from a few ideas. Thus the Upaniṣads speak of the importance of *kāma* or desire which ties a person to the world.[49] The Upaniṣad maintains that the attainment of *Brahman* helps to transcend hunger, thirst, sorrow, old age and death.[50] Renunciation according to the Upaniṣads is the means of overcoming sorrow and attaining *Brahman*.[51] When a person dies his *karma* controls his new existence. The texts speak of two kinds of knowledge, that which is based on knowledge (*vijñāna*) and that which is intuitive (*prajñā*).[52] Equally significant is the notion of the seeker having to overcome temptation. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, Naciketas has a dialogue with Yama, the god of death, who offers attractive alternatives to the former's search for salvation, but ultimately concedes to the wish of Naciketas and reveals to him the doctrine of *Brahman*.

These points of seeming similarity should not however detract from the fact that the Buddha was not merely following through some ideas of the Upaniṣads but even where this may seem so, he was transforming them. The Buddha also speaks of desire as the cause of sorrow, but uses the term *tṛṣṇā* which carries a starker meaning of thirst, with an emphasis on the longing for or grasping towards the quenching of thirst, rather than the more ambiguous *kāma*. Hunger, disease, old age and death are familiar to us from the biography of the Buddha which are said to have led him to question the permanence of life. The Buddha, prior to his enlightenment, has a dialogue with Māra, the personification of evil, and refuses the temptations.[53] The god of death is of course the more powerful image but in a system without deities, as was the Buddhist, a deity could not be a teacher and knowledge has ultimately to be discovered by the individual. Naciketas' concern with what happens after the great departure is common to both him and the Buddha. *Tṛṣnā* (desire) became the central cause of suffering and the elimination of desire the focus of ethical and behaviourial norms. The analysis of ethics was in the context of human action with logic, rationality and intuition as major elements of analysis. Central to Buddhist thinking was the emphasis on causality. To this was linked the doctrine of *karma* and the next life. The early Upaniṣads are not consistent in their view of the soul after death. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* speaks of the *devayāna* or the path of light and the *pitṛyāna*, the path of darkness: whereas in the former there is no rebirth, in the case of the latter, the soul is reborn after a period.[54] The *Kauṣītakī* has a variation on this. It states that all souls go to the *pitṛyāna* from where some move permanently to the *devayāna* and others are reborn.[55] The link between desire and rebirth is expressed more clearly in a later Upaniṣad, the *Muṇḍaka*.[56] To the Buddha, transcendental concerns, as e.g. the path to *nirvāṇa*, were also viewed as systems explaining social action and human destiny. However, even the quest for salvation is not the acceptance of the arbitrariness of human actions and social arrangements, but the conscious outcome of these on the basis of human choice.

The doctrine of causation was to become central to the teaching of many sects at this time.

Schools of thought evolve from earlier systems. Buddhism was a heterodoxy because it took the structure of the earlier system but gave it a new focus. It is not therefore confined to the boundaries and framework of Vedic and Upanisadic thought. It not only goes beyond but changes the paradigm. If the Upaniṣads mark a watershed between the ideologies of Vedic brahmanism on the one hand and the 'heterodoxies' on the other and draw upon the concerns of certain categories of brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas, Buddhist ideology changes the paradigm to focus on the concerns of the *gahapatis* and *seṭṭhis*. It abolishes the notion of a secret doctrine and universalizes its teaching.

The growth of Buddhist heterodoxy has to be seen in the various other contexts, the most radical of which have come to be called the doctrines of the Lokāyata. In the Buddhist texts, it is explained as the science of causuistry in which logic was central.[57] This kind of discourse perhaps had its origin in the riddles posed in the course of the sacrifice, since the structure of riddles derives from an abstraction of logic and questions were often put in the form of riddles in the texts under discussion. As such, the technique was not characteristic of heterodox methods of argument and grew within the Vedic practice. However, it was taken over and developed into an intellectual method. Some sects underlined empiricism as the sole source of knowledge, and argued that the soul does not exist since it cannot be perceived or felt, that there is little merit in religious practices and that the only source of knowledge is sense perception. This reduced the importance of inference. The authority of the Vedas was denounced as being tainted by untruth, self-contradiction and tautology.[58] These views did make an impact on Buddhist thinking, although by and large the Buddha was contemptuous of these sects. Logic was important to such debates. This was an early occasion when analytical categories were introduced and used in discourse as well as being applied to the comprehension of social reality. Such debates were joined by brāhmaṇas as well as non-brāhmaṇas. Similar categories of thought were applied to disciplines other than philosophical discourse as is evident from the first grammar of Sanskrit composed by Pāṇini. Within the tradition of analysing language, the form of debate which came to be preferred by grammarians, *pūrva-paksa prati-pakṣa*, carries something of a dialectical flavour.

An important notion common to many of these sects was that the analysis of social action or metaphysical beliefs required a distancing from society and ultimately the path to salvation lay through renunciation. This too germinates from the Vedic concept of *tyāga* or separation, abandonment, resignation. The freeing was both from society and the body. Renunciation for those who followed the precepts of the *Dharmasūtras* was of course very different from what it was for those who were Nirgranthas or Buddhists. Brahmanism supported the notion of the four *āśramas* where any form of renunciation was subsequent to a socially productive life. For others it had the reverse effect of withdrawing from social obligations. For the Buddhists, this led to the

dichotomy of preaching to two categories, the *gṛhastha* or the householders who were embedded in society and the *tyāgin* or *parivrājaka* who had renounced their social obligations. The mundane and the transcendental of a different order were thus separated. But unlike the ascetics who were symbolically dead to society and attempted to reduce their dependence on the physical body by mortification, the Buddhist renouncers were to become a parallel or alternative society and were made part of the scheme of things through the argument that they were assisting the *gṛhastha* towards salvation. The contradiction lay in the fact that although the societal order was seen as inferior and incomplete, its continuance and its very incompleteness was necessary for the existence and justification of the renouncers.

The degree to which the Buddhists and other sects were heterodox becomes evident from both their doctrines as well as their social role. If dissent is a characteristic of heterodoxy then there is evidence for it. The Buddhists had a firm doctrinal position in which Vedic theories and practices were either discarded or at least questioned. Even the less orthodox theories of the earlier Upanisads were merely the starting point for a well-articulated and distinct ideological position. The relationship between the brāhmaṇas and the *śramaṇas* was to be characterized later as that between the snake and the mongoose, the cat and the mouse, the venom of opposition being instinctive.[59] Even more significant was the physical form which the Buddhist, Jaina, Ājīvika and some other sects were to take, where, from the start their identity was based on clustering around particular teachers and then building an order (*saṅgha*) and institution around this identity. The differentiation was sharp and clear both between the order and the rest of society as well as between the orders; a differentiation which was to lead to the segmenting off of sects from the main stem on issues involving precisely these questions of identity and doctrinal differences. The institutionalizing of the sects and the competition among them for acceptance encouraged in them both historiographical thinking as well as missionary activities.

The social hinterland of these sects was not immune to these changes and the degree to which they were accepted is also indicative of changed social conditions. Religion as an embedded feature was not prised loose but nevertheless the shift from revelation to analysis did suggest new modes for religious thought. Religious practice did not dominate ethics but ethical emphasis did pervade the concept of social norms. Earlier practices were given a new orientation as is exemplified in the concept of *dāna* and *puṇya*. *Dāna* was gift-giving, what was earlier given at the sacrificial ritual and was now given to the *saṅgha* or the order of the sect; *puṇya* was the merit which accrued from such actions and which contributed towards the donor's proximity to *nirvāṇa*. Prestations were neither prescribed nor hierarchically ordered; they could be a gift from anyone and the merit so accumulated was part of the balance between the individial and his credit situation *vis-a-vis nirvāṇa*, allowing for the fact that *dāna* constituted only one element in the building up of *puṇya*. The essence of religion had begun to change. It was less the ritual act and more the individual

concern with salvation, at least in theory. In practice the ritual acts were not altogether forsaken but less meticulously observed. The grander rituals were often performed for reasons of legitimation as was the case with kings. The prestations however were now marginal to the access to economic resources since the economy itself had been transformed from the days of pastoralism mixed with agriculture in the western Ganges valley.

Legitimizing the king which was a crucial function of the royal sacrifices of the Vedic texts was not discontinued, although it became less frequent. The same function was also performed by the Buddhist *saṅgha* in accepting royal patronage and grants. The alternate function of the king ordering the sacrifice and therefore becoming the initiator of religious action was sought to be paralleled by the insistence in Buddhist historiography on associating kings with the calling of the various Buddhist Councils where doctrinal differences were sorted out. Thus Ajātaśatru of Magadha is associated with the calling of the First Council of Rājagṛha soon after the Buddha's death and Aśoka Maurya with the Third Council at Pāṭaliputra when the pre-eminence of the dominant Sthaviravāda sect was established. The *saṅgha* was thus both above and beyond secular society yet at the same time closely linked to it. What is significant is not the continuity of the religious connection with the political but the change in the nature of the link. The *sangha* could be independent of royal patronage or could, if it wanted greater social control, work through royal patronage. The political order as the central locus of mundane society was not regarded as exclusive, for the ideal king as defined by Buddhism was the *cakkavattin/ cakravartin*, the just king who rules in accordance with the *Dhamma* or the ethical system as developed by Buddhist thinking.[60] It was not accountability to a higher authority as much as accordance with a higher ethic which governed the making of a *cakkavattin*. The accountability is in any case to society, for kingship according to Buddhist theory evolved out of a situation of disharmony where one person, the *mahāsammatta*, was elected to maintain order. This theory of the origin of kingship presupposes a number of persons in competition and conflict and the need for defining a hierarchy. This may well have been a reflection of competing elites at this time.

The activity of the new sects is also indicative of new social groups. Not only did these ideologies often reinforce the kṣatriyas as an alternative focus of power to the brāhmaṇa with material wealth in the form of land-ownership but also provided the backing of an ideology emphasizing the transcendental in a manner which appealed even to some brāhmaṇas. This was as it were a logical outcome of the direction taken by the Upaniṣads. But the appeal also extended elsewhere and included an entirely new social group, that of the merchants and traders who were essential to the towns of this time. The social genesis of these groups appears to have been in the land-owning families for it was from these *gahapatis* or householders that there emerged the *seṭṭhi-gahapatis*, later to become the families of bankers, financiers and traders. In a later period, it was these groups which formed the hard core among the patrons of Buddhism and Jainism, apart from royalty. By the Mauryan period, therefore, the range of elites extended

from brāhmaṇas to kṣatriyas to *seṭṭhis*. In terms of economic classes, the land-owning *gahapatis* (which included some brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas) and the commercial *seṭṭhis* were clearly dominant. Implicit in this diversification was the idea that there was also a range of ideologies. The political elites remained the land-owning groups but could now be drawn from kṣatriya, brāhamaṇa and even (if brāhmaṇa sources are to be believed) from the śūdra *varṇa*. Thus the Nanda and Maurya dynasties are described as being of śūdra origin in the Purāṇic dynastic lists. It is however possible that this was intended more as a remark of contempt for dynasties supportive of the new sects rather than as a statement of authenticated social origins.

The existence of new elites has at one level to do with the social and economic changes evident in the middle Ganges valley as compared to the Vedic heartland to the west. The pastoral-agrarian economy of the latter with a premium on the cultivation of wheat and barley and substantially by villages with few clusters of densely populated centres presented a rather different social landscape from that of the eastern area. Here the introduction of wet rice cultivation resulted in a new pattern of settlement. The emphasis was on large areas of land under cultivation, to an exclusion virtually of pastoralism, given the marshlands of north Bihar. Wet rice cultivation and irrigation meant intensive labour controlled by entrepreneurs requiring initially the clearing of the monsoon forest in which the use of iron technology now adapted to agriculture was by no means marginal. Once the mechanics were under control then the produce was so substantial that it did open up the possibility of other developments such as incipient trade. The latter used the network of geographically located nodal points connected by the river system of the Ganges plain to evolve complex circuits of exchange. These changes were not unconnected with the other changes discussed earlier in this paper and an interlinking is necessary although not of a mechanical kind.

The earlier society seems to have expanded less through aggression and more through migration. Cattle raids did give some power over a neighbouring area but this tended to be parochial. The migration and settlement of a segment of a tribe was a more effective way of extending the control of a lineage and this was practised in many areas. With the establishment of the monarchical state raids and migrations gave way to annexation and consolidation of annexed territory. This was necessary in a situation where revenue was beginning to be systematically collected and territorial control provided access to power. The endorsement of the concept of non-violence however militated against aggrandizement and to that extent could act as a theoretical check on untrammelled state power.

There are two evident features in this discussion which need to be reiterated. One is the transformation of earlier traditions into later forms, which change not only in the new context but also in the new network of relations. The second is the attempt of universalizing the ideology and moving away from the ethic of groups and castes to that of society *per se*. This is partly expressed in the marginalizing of *varṇa* functions in some sects and their elimination in the

teachings of the Lokāyata sects. Whereas caste as *jāti* remains important in defining marriage and kinship, the actual status of *varṇa* become less significant in the new theories. Social differentiation moves in the direction of economic and professional distinctions in terms of access to resources. Thus the dichotomy between the *gahapati* (householder) and the cultivator (*kassaka*) is more real than between the kṣatriya and the śūdra.[61] Another dichotomy of a different kind was that between the householder and the monk. In the parallel society of the *saṅgha*, social distinctions are sought to be negated and the doctrine and its laws are universally applicable to all. In the concept of the *cakkavattin* the king dispenses justice and acts righteously irrespective of caste considerations. The law of *Dhamma* was a universally applicable ethic and this places it above any given reality.

This difference is also apparent in the two institutions symbolic of the ideological forms of the doctrines. The Vedic hermitages were *āśramas*, retreats in the forest inhabited generally by brāhmaṇas and their wives and disciples, removed from cities and settlements and self-sufficient in their needs. Those living there had fulfilled their social obligations and moved towards renunciation in the twilight of their lives. This was a contrast to the Buddhist *saṅgha*, open even to the young. The *saṅgha* was the assembly or coming together of a number of people drawn from various backgrounds in the common pursuit of a path to salvation. These were located close to settlements and cities from where they drew their sustenance. Both the *āśrama* and the monastery often performed the function of frontier settlements in later periods when the monasteries also become self-sufficient. Travelling monks and renouncers formed a network of communication in which an exchange of ideas was natural. In this earlier period the dependence of the monastery on the settlement was the reversal of the self-sufficient *āśrama*. Since the Buddhist monastic tradition did not have an ecclesiastical parallel or a secular clergy, its relations with the lay community had to be close. The early bifurcation of shaman and priest continues into these times. Shamanistic traces can be seen in the questioning of the sacrificial ritual and the alternate path to salvation in *yoga* and meditation. The concern with individual salvation and *nirvāṇa* was alien to shamanism and can be traced to Upaniṣadic thought. The transformation of this thought into the doctrine of the sect was to become the foundation in turn for other ideologies and belief-systems.

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3

The Changing Concept of 'Gṛhapati'

SUVIRA JAISWAL

Frequent references to the term *gahapati* in the Buddhist Pāli literature have prompted a number of studies[1] which attempt to bring out its various connotations through contextual analyses. The picture presented is still not without certain ambiguities. Moreover, not much attention has been given to its Sanskrit etymon *gṛhapati* occurring in the Vedic literature; and it is assumed that since the term literally means the head or 'master' of the *gṛha*, that is household, it must have been the designation of the head of a joint patriarchal family or household and the institution can be traced back to the *Ṛgveda*, where the term occurs a number of times. However, long survival of this term in its Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic forms (Pāli *gahapati*, Prākrit, *gahavai*) and brāhmaṇical and non-brāhamaṇical contexts makes it imperative that one should guard against reading later meanings into earlier passages and look for both textual and contextual support.

In the *Ṛgveda* Agni is described as *gṛhapati* at numerous places[2] and the epithet is generally seen as a reference to the sacred household-fire which must have been maintained in each household or *gṛha*. At one place Agni is said to have grown 'bright and noble' in every *gṛha*, stirred by Mātarisvan.[3] But the precise nature of Rgvedic *gṛha* is difficult to define. It has been assumed[4] that it must have consisted of members of four generations living together headed by a *paterfamilias* who was known as the *gṛhapati*. Nevertheless, the presumption of such lineal extended families constituting single households among the early Vedic people appears to be a prochronism not backed by the internal evidence of the *Ṛgveda*.[5] The only verses which are cited in support of this view are from the wedding hymn found in the Xth *maṇḍala*, admittedly one of the latest and largest hymns, which appears to have been refashioned a number of times by the priestly hands. The language of the later verses of the hymn which expresses the wish that the bride may rule over her father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law (verse 46) and sport with her sons and grandsons (verse 42) is more akin to classical Sanskrit than to the Vedic[6] and may have been added when the institution of patrilineal extended family household was well-established among the Vedic Aryans. But, as we shall see, even this hymn retains traces of a different and earlier conception of the *gṛhapati* and his household, which does not correspond to an extended lineage but suggests residential unity of clansmen living under the same roof or in close proximity and constituting one single unit for ritual and economic purposes. We have

argued earlier[7] that the Ṛgvedic kinship structure suggests the existence of "elementary" or nuclear families closely embedded in the wider group of clan, which was the basic socio-economic unit and not the extended patrilineal family. There are frequent references to individual couples (*mithunā dampatī*) engaged in washing and pressing the *soma* juice and tending fire in their houses (*dama*), just as there are numerous indications of the collective functioning of groups or collectivities mentioned simply as *janāḥ*, the *viś* or various named tribal entities. But there is hardly any indication of complex patrilineages constituting households in early Vedic times. The *gṛhapati* of the *Ṛgveda* was not a householder heading a patriarchal joint family but the head of an extended kin-group which had residential unity and formed one unit for social, economic and ritual purpose.

It seems that one of the significant attributes of the Ṛgvedic *gṛhapati* is his youthfulness. Several passages which speak of Agni as *gṛhapati* also describe him as a wise, young, or youngest of the gods at the same time. In one verse[8] of the IInd *maṇḍala*, which is also repeated in the VIIIth *maṇḍala*, Agni is identified with different categories of priests along with *gṛhapati*. The narrative is reminiscent of the *sattra* sacrifices. In a *sattra* sacrifice not only all the participants themselves perform the functions of various priests, but they also choose one of them as their *gṛhapati*, who leads them in ritual acts. It is interesting that for a *sattra* the age of the participants including that of the *gṛhapati* has to be between seventeen and twenty-four years[9] and they perform the sacrifice jointly along with their wives who are also given *dīkṣā* or initiation for the purpose. A critical study of the *śrauta* ritual leads Heesterman to conclude that originally the *gṛhapati* was the leader of a band of "trekking sacrificers" who performed the mobile sacrificial sessions, the so-called *yātsattras*, which involved booty-winning expeditions and collection of goods for the sacrifice (*saniyācana*); and the entire sacrificial activity was interwoven with the trekking and resettling activities of the Aryan nomadic bands.[10] This view finds some support from the fact that in the *Ṛgveda* the *gṛhapati* is conceived of as young, manly, and bountiful[11] and the household accoutrement (*gārhapatyāni*) of the nomadic *gṛhapati* is described as *asthūri*, a cart drawn by more than one horse.[12]

The *śrautasūtras* lay down that only members of the brāhmaṇa *varṇa* may participate in a *sattra* sacrifice and according to one view all the particpants should be members of the same *gotra*.[13] Another view[14] recommends that if members of different *gotras* join in a *sattra* the ritual procedure should be regulated by the *gotra* of the *gṛhapati*. The emergence of separate *varṇa* categories is a later Vedic phenomenon; but such rules betray the original clan-based composition of the early Vedic *sattras*. Thus originally the *gṛhapati* seems to have been the leader of the youth of his clan responsible for the well-being, protection and prosperity of his kin-group.

It may be noted that the sacred fire of the *gṛhapati*, the *gārhapatyāgni*, was one of the three *śrauta* fires, the other two being the *āhavanīya* and the *dākṣiṇāgni* which were kindled later after the establishment of the *gārhapatya*

fire,[15] and it is not to be confused with the *grhyāgni*, also known as *smārtāgni, vaivāhikāgni* or *śālāgni* in the *gṛhyasūtras*.[16] The latter was the domestic fire of the individual household established by a householder described as *gṛhī* or *gṛhastha* for the purposes of *gṛhyakarma* or *pākayajñas*.[17] The rules and structure of the *gṛhya* ritual were modelled along the same lines as those of the *śrauta* ritual,[18] but the context of the two were quite different. Thus, both the *smārta gṛhyāgni* and the *śrauta gārhapatyāgni* were established in the same manner and were to be maintained only by a householder whose wife was still living; and these could not be established or maintained by an unmarried person or a widower. But, whereas the *smārta gṛhyāgni* was established to meet the religious needs of an individual householder in the second stage of life, that is *gṛhastha*, the *śrauta gārhpatyāgni*, being the fire of *gṛhapati*, had a very different concern. It was meant to secure the well- being, fertility and wealth of an extended kin-group, of which the *gṛhapati* was the leader. Hence the bride of *gṛhapati* was implored to be ever vigilant for the sake of the *gārhapatya* fire[19] to maintain which the gods had bestowed the bride upon the husband.[20] She was asked to go to the houses of his kinsmen so that she could discharge her duties as the *gṛhapatnī* and having control over the houses (*gṛhān*) may speak up in the council (*vidhatha*).[21] The mention of the houses in plural in this context is significant and is indicative of the special position of the *gṛhapatnī* with regards to the extended kin-group of her husband. The verse is repeated in the *Atharvaveda*, which in the following hymn[22] clearly enjoins upon the bride to worship the sacred household fire thus making the connection clear. The bride is described as the extender of the houses *(pratāriṇī gṛhānām)*[23] and not of just one house. One has to see here a reference to the families of her husband's clansmen and she is repeatedly advised to go to their houses,[24] so that she may have ''easy control'' of the houses (*suyamā gṛhebhyaḥ*)[25] and continue to speak in the clan-council, the *vidhata*, till her ripe old age.[26] Obviously, she was not an ordinary bride but the wife of the *gṛhapati*, a person with substantial power and authority. It is interesting that in a passage of the *Atharvaveda* at the time of the new crop the cultivator is advised to offer three measures of corn to the Gandharvas and four measures to the *gṛhapatnī*.[27] It is in this context that the prayer for becoming *gṛhamedhī gṛhapati*, the *gṛhapati* who performs the household sacrifice, becomes intelligible.[28]

A hymn of the *Ṛgveda* dedicated to the Season (*Ṛtu*) as a personified deity speaks of the god Agni as guiding the sacrifice through the season (*ṛtunā*) with the *gārhapatya*.[29] This may be linked to the conception of Agni as the *gṛhapati*. Kane[30] rightly sees in this a clear mention of the *śrauta* fire, the *gārhapatyāgni*. The hymn invokes the god Agni to escort the gods to the three appointed places apparently the three *śrauta* fires, and speaks of the offering of the *soma* juice in the *potra*, *neṣṭra* and *brāhmaṇa* cups[31] obviously by the ritual experts designated correspondingly. The sacrificial ritual is well-developed, but there is nothing to show that the division of the *soma* sacrifices into *ahīna* and *sattra* based on *varṇa* discriminations had also taken place. The priests had not yet become a hereditary, exclusive class and *yajña* was a group activity directed towards societal objectives.

At any rate, the description of the Maruts as performers of the *gṛhamedha*[32] reveals through projection at the divine level the concept of a household sacrifice performed by a band of young warriors acting themselves as priests. The Maruts are young and of the same age and being the sons of Rudra constitute a single kin-unit. They act both as warriors as well as priests.[33] In the *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*,[34] they are said to have Viṣṇu as their *sthapati*. It seems to us that the *sthapati* and the *gṛhapati* are sometimes used interchangeably to describe the same phenomenon. At one place the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*[35] speaks of the Vrātyas as having held a sacrificial session (*sattra*) with Buddha as their *sthapati*. Elsewhere it mentions Dyūtāna Māruta as the *gṛhapati* of the Vrātyas.[36] We learn that he was the leader of the Maruts. According to Heesterman[37] the Maruts were the mythical prototype of the Vrātyas; and the instiution of *gṛhapati* was distinctive of the *sattra* sacrifices as well as that of the Vrātyas. A *sava* sacrifice designated as *sthapatisava* or *vaiśyasava* is mentioned in a number of *śrautasūtras* and on this basis Caland[36] surmises that the *sthapati* was a vaiśya. In later times the institutions of the *sthapati* and the *gṛhapati* (Pāli, *gahapati*) were found among those who were engaged in cultivation, crafts or architectural activities.[39] The Bahuvedaniya-sutta of the *Majjhima Nikāya* mentions a Pañcakāṅga *thapati* (*sthapati*) in its subsection on the *gahapatis* (*Gahapati-vagga*).

Romila Thapar is of the view[40] that initially "the housholding system" was common to both the *rājanyas* and the *viś*, but later with the changeover to agriculture and decreasing importance of pastoralism the cattle-raids of the *rājanyas* no longer produced as much wealth as was the case earlier. So the *rājanyas* acquired power and converted themselves into kṣatriyas living off the prestations received from the *viś*, who cultivated land. Gradually "the householding economy came to be associated with the lineages of the *viś* rather than those of the kṣatriyas" and the household became the unit of agricultural production. This eventually gave rise to the *gṛhapati* as a social category.

This perceptive reconstruction requires some modification. Thapar seems to be making a subtle distinction between the householding system and the householding economy based on agriculture[41] but does not clarify what is her concept of the "householding system". Apparently she means by this the presence of the institution of the *gṛhapati*; for she writes that "the principal ritual role of the *gṛhapati* was that of the *yajamāna*" (he who orders the sacrifice) and in later Vedic texts "there are references to *gṛhapatis* and *yajamānas* which suggest kṣatriyas but do not preclude vaiśyas".[42] But she overlooks the fact that in the later Vedic texts the status of *gṛhapati* is not confined to the *rājanyas* and the vaiśyas only; it is open to all the three upper *varṇas*, who have the right to perform Vedic sacrifices. The later Vedic texts being very conscious of the *varṇa* distinctions even classify the sacrifices into the *ahīna* and the *sattra* categories limiting the latter to the brāhmaṇa *varṇa* only; and we have already seen that *gṛhapati* is indispensable in a *sattra*. Nor is it possible to argue that in every case the brāhmaṇa *gṛhapati* was only officiating for a kṣatriya patron. The internal structure of the *sattra* sacrifice

clearly shows that the *gṛhapati* was not a substitute for the *yajamāna* or patron. The benefit occurring out of a *sattra* was supposed to be shared equally by the participants of the *sattra*; and the *gṛhapati* was only their leader. In fact, the institutions of the *sattra* as well as that of the *gṛhapati* predate *varṇa* divisions and relate to the collective functioning of the clans or extended-kin-groups of the Ṛgvedic people.[43] We may note that even later in a changed economic set-up when the *gṛhapati* is seen as the head of a patriarchal household based on agricultural earnings, the brāhmaṇa-*gṛhapatis* are no less prominent. Besides, the institution of *gṛhapati* also characterizes the Vrātyas in later Vedic literature; and they are generally regarded as having been outside the *varṇa* system. According to the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* the Vrātyas neither study the Vedas nor practise trade or agriculture.[44]

The transformation of *gṛhapati* from a leader of the extended kin-group taking care of its ritual and material needs to the head of a complex household structured on patrilineal principles is no doubt connected with the shift from nomadic pastoralism to sedentary agriculture. We have argued elsewhere[45] that the existence of complex households in ancient times, whether matrilineal or patrilineal, was closely linked with the ownership of agricultural land, which was held jointly and provided joint income and support to the members of the household even though it was managed or controlled by the head of the household. Agriculture required collective labour of family members or slaves and hired labourers; and as such complex households were more suited to this mode of production. However, the *gṛhapati* does not seem to have been the head of an ordinary peasant household but a person with a lot of prestige and some authority even in the age of the Buddha. Perhaps he was the leader or a leading member of an agricultural community.

In a scholarly study of the social environment of early Buddhism Uma Chakravarti has argued that the *gṛhapati* of the Pāli texts was not merely the head of the household but the "head of the household as a production unit".[46] This is a very important dimension of the role of the *gahapati* or *gṛhapati*, and in our opinion even in early Vedic times the *gṛhapati* headed a production unit although the nature of production as well as that of the "household" was quite different in that age. The shift in the meaning of the term was not from "denoting a householder to denoting an agriculturist"[47] but from the head of the production-unit of one type to another, in the latter case it was a patrilineal joint household which included both kin and non-kin members such as slaves and hired-labourers. Strictly speaking, *gahapati* should not be translated as "householder", which is the sense conveyed by such terms as *gṛhastha* or *gṛhī*. *Gṛhapati* was the "master of the unit konwn as *gṛha*" and as such conveyed a sense of authority. Thus the well known Śailārwāḍi inscription[48] describes a peasant who works in hs own fields as *kuṭumbika* but speaks of his son as the *gahapati*. Apparently the son had attained the position of a "squire" or leader of the peasant-cultivators. The Upālisutta of the *Majjhima Nikāya*[49] speaks of *gahapati* Upāli of the Bālaka village sitting with *gihī-parisayu* (*gṛhi-pariṣad*) which seems to have been the assembly of ordinary peasant householders. The

gahapatis are always identified by the name of their localities and it may not be without significance that the Pāli texts do not mention more than one *gahapati* hailing from the same village or locality. Fick sees in them "the gentry of the land, the lower land-owning nobility in contrast with the nobility which is related to princely houses, the khattiyas".[50] They are invariably depicted as men of substance, and not as "subsistence farmers",[51] located mainly in the countryside but sometimes also in urban areas operating as traders or *seṭṭhi-gahapatis*, and it will be incorrect to confuse this category with that of the ordinary peasants or *gṛhastha*.[52] It has been pointed out[53] that although *gahapati* is frequently mentioned in the inscriptions of western India, an inscription from Karle uses the term *gahata* (*gṛhastha*) to indicate an ordinary householder. According to Wagle it was the more prosperous heads of households who were known as *gahapatis*.[54] But Sibesh Chandra Bhattacharya is right in asserting that the *gahapati* was more than a mere head of a household. His own view that a "*gahapati* might have been the leader and the representative of traders in the village community" is based on post-Maurya and pre-Gupta sources and there is no doubt that with the accumulated surplus[55] from agriculture many of the *gahapatis* turned towards trade, which was flourishing in the early centuries preceding and succeeding the Christian era. But this does not negate the view that in the preceding period the *gahapatis* were notable entrepreneurs who organized the cultivation of large tracts of land with hired labour and slaves and were regarded as important tax-payers.[56] Such *gahapatis* were also found among the brāhmaṇas who owned and supervised the cultivation of *brahamadeya* lands and had to pay taxes to the king.[57] The institution survived till the time of Kumārila who informs that the *gahapati* does not work on his land himself but employs hired labourers or *karmakāras* to work for him.[58]

Wagle pointed out that the term *gahapati* was not generally applied to the members of the kṣatriya clans or king's servants. Uma Chakravarti explains it on the ground that the kṣatriya clans of the *gaṇa-rājyas* held the land in common and there was no private ownership. But a *gahapati* was an independent owner-cultivator using his family-labour as well as that of hired workers and slaves, depending on his means. Hence the category of *gahapati* was conspicuously absent in the *gaṇa-rājyas* and there were no "khattiya-*gahapatis*". On the other hand, the bulk of land in the contemporary monarchies was in the hands of *gahapatis* where they constituted the dominant peasantry. However, the Buddhist texts do not provide a single instance of a *gahapati* cultivating the field with his own or his family's labour. Such subsistence-farmers or free-peasants are described as *kassakas* in the *Dīgha Nikāya*.[59] Moreover, although it is quite plausible that the collective political functioning of the *gaṇa-rājyas* should have its roots in communal ownership of land, a continuation of tribal traditions in pre-state polities, available evidence is more in favour of the thesis of Walter Ruben[60] who held that the members of the ruling kṣatriya clans in the north-eastern republics had their own separate estates. In the *Vinaya Piṭaka*[61] the Śākya *rājā* Bhaddhiya speaks of transferring his estate to his sons and brothers before accepting monkhood. The title *rājā*, in

this context does not mean a monarch, for the heads of all the families of the ruling clan had the title of *rājā*. Another Śākya, Mahānāma, too took over the management of his family's estate after the death of his father and gave detailed instructions about agricultural operations for the management of his ancestral farm to his younger brother Aniruddha when he thought of joining the *saṅgha*. It seems likely that the ownership of land in the *gaṇa-rājyas* was confined to the members of the ruling clan and it could not be alienated without the consent of the clan. Since the heads of the households of the ruling clan preferred the title of *rājā* or 'kṣatriya', as they enjoy political power too, they were naturally distinguished from the *gahapatis*. Nevertheless, Śākya Mahānāma is mentioned in the subsection on the *gahapatis* (*gahapati-vagga*) owing to the similarity of his occupation with that of a *gahapati* and Suddhodana, the father of the Buddha, is described as ploughing the field even if it was only a ritual.[62]

Large farms worked with slave and hired labour characterized the economy of large parts of eastern India in the age of the Buddha; and the system seems to have continued in the early centuries of Christian era in north-eastern and western India. It becomes much less conspicuous in the subsequent centuries. The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya recommends that under the direction of the Administrator (*samāhartṛ*) secret agents disguised as *gṛhapatis* should find out the number of fields, houses and families in those villages in which they are stationed.[63] *Gahavai*, the Prākrit form of *grhapati*, occurs in a number of verses[64] of the *Gāthā-saptaśatī* and in one[65] of them he is also described as *hālika*, the ploughman. In the *Daśakumāraiarita* of Daṇḍin and the *Mṛcchakaṭika* of Śūdraka the *gṛhapati* appears as the head or judge of a village.[66] But the category seems to have completely disappeared from the scene in early medieval times. Its decline is perhaps linked with the structural changes in the countryside connected with the emergence of Indian feudalism.

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3. Ibid. I.71.4. Mātariśvan is a semi-divine being who is supposed to have brought Agni to Bhṛgu. Ralph T.H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Ṛgveda*, reprint, Delhi, 1986, p. 47a, note 4.
4. R.S. Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, New Delhi, 1983, p. 48; A.A. Macdonell and A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, 2 vols., London, 1912, reprint, Delhi, 1982, s.v. *gṛhapati*.
5. Suvira Jaiswal. "Stratification in Ṛgvedic Society: Evidence and Paradigms", *IHR*, XVI, pp. 26f.
6. *Ṛgveda*, X.85. See Shakuntala Rao Shastri, *Women in the Vedic Age*, Bombay, 1954, pp. 13-18.

7. *kavirgṛhapatiryuvā, Ṛgveda*, I.12.6; VII.15.2; VIII.102.1. Also see VI.48.8.
8. *Ṛgveda*, II.1.2. and X.91.2.
9. P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, pt 2, Poona, 1941, p. 1241.
10. J.C. Heesterman, "Householder and Wanderer", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, XV, 1981, pp. 251- 71.
11. VI.53.2. 12. VI.15.19. 13. P.V. Kane, op. cit., p.1242.
14. Ibid. 15. Ibid., pp. 994-95.
16. Ibid., vol. II, pt I, pp. 678-79.
17. *Manusmṛti*, III.67; *Kathākagṛhyasūtra*, 47.1-2; Kane, op. cit.
18. Brian K. Smith, "The Unity of Ritual: The Place of Domestic Sacrifice in Vedic Ritualism", *Indo-Iranian Journal*, XXIX, 1986, pp. 79-96.
19. *asmin gṛhe gārhapatyāya jāgṛhi, Ṛgveda*, X.85.27. Also see *Atharvaveda*, XIV.1.21.
20. *bhago aryamā savitā purandhir-mahyam tvādurgārhapatyāya devaḥ. Ṛgveda*, X.85.36; *Atharvaveda*, XIV.1.50.
21. *gṛhān gaccha gṛhapatnī yathāso vaśinī tvam vidathamā vadāsi, Ṛgveda*, X.85.26. It is also found in *Atharvaveda*, XIV.1.20.
22. *syonemamagniṃ gārhapatyāṃ saparya*, ibid., XIV.2.18 and *yadā gārhapatyamasarpayet*, verse 20. Also see ibid. verse 23.
23. Ibid., verse 26. 24. Ibid., verse 75. 25. Ibid., verse 17.
26. *Ṛgveda*, X.85.27; *Atharvaveda*, XIV.1.21.
27. *Atharvaveda*, III.24.6. 28. *gṛhamedhī gṛhapatim mā kṛṇu*, ibid. XIX.31.13.
29. *Ṛgveda*, I.15.12. 30. Kane, op. cit., p. 981.
31. See verses 2.5 and 9 of the hymn. 32. *Ṛgveda*. 56.14; VII.59.10.
33. A.A. Macdonell, *The Vedic Mythology*, reprint, Delhi, 1971, p. 80.
34. *Baudhāyana Śrauta Śutra*, ed., W. Caland, 3 vols., Calcutta, 1904-24 reprint, New Delhi, 1982, XVIII.26.
35. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, tr. W. Caland, Calcutta, 1931, XXIV.18.2.
36. Ibid., XVII.1.7.
37. *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, V.5.9.4 quoted by J.C. Heesterman, 'Vrātya and Sacrifice', *Indo-Iranian Journal*, VI, 1962-63, p. 17.
38. Caland, op. cit., p. 466.
39. In the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, II.24.39 *sthapati* is the leader of the architects. Sudarśanācārya, the commentator of the *Āpastambagṛhyasūtra* identifies *sthapati* as a vaiśya. See his comment on *Āpastambagṛhyasūtra*, XIII.5.3, 1971, p. 207. Also see *Majjhima Nikāya*, tr. Rahula Sankrityayana, 2nd edition, 1964, p. 239, n. 1 and *Saṃyutta Nikāya* ed., L. Feer, 6 vols., PTS, London, 1884-1904, Vol.V, pp. 348f, for Purāna and Īsidatta, the two brothers, both being described as *thapati* (architects).
40. *From Lineage to State*, Bombay, 1984, pp. 36-38.
41. But see ibid., p. 39 where it is said in the context of post-Vedic agricultural economy, "The *viś* was by now characterized by the householding system".
42. Ibid., p. 37.
43. Heesterman has argued that the concept of *dakṣiṇā* reflects an earlier stage when the entire clan participated in the ritual and the wealth was shared. J.C. Heesterman, "Reflections on the Significance of the Dakṣiṇā", *Indo-Iranian Journal*, III, 1959-60, pp. 241-58.
44. *Pañcaviṃsa Brāhmaṇa*, XVII.1.2. But for an original interpretation of the Vrātya, see Heesterman, supra, note 37.
45. Suvira Jaiswal, "Studies in Early Indian Social History: Trends and Possibilities", *IHR*, VI, nos. 1-2 (July 1979-January 1980), p. 60.
46. Uma Chakravarti, *Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, pp. 65-93.
47. Ibid., p. 86.
48. Jas Burgess and Bhagwanlal Indraji, *Cave Temples of Western India*, reprint, Delhi, 1976, p. 38. D.D. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, 30, 1957, pp. 50-71.

49. *Majjhima Nikāya*, Upāli-Sutta (no. 56), *Vinaya Piṭaka* (ed., N. Oldenberg, 5 vols., London, 1879-83), vol. I, p. 350, *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (ed., R.Morris and E. Hardy, 5 vols., PTS, London, 1885-1900), II, p. 182.
50. Richard Fick, op. cit., p. 253.
51. Uma Chakravarti, *Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, pp. 86, 178; *Idem*, "Towards a Historical Sociology of Stratification in Ancient India, Evidence from Buddhist Sources", *Economic and Political Weekly*, XX, no. 9, 2 March 1985, p. 359.
52. Uma Chakarvarti, *Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, pp. 92-93.
53. S.C. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p. 131. 54. N. Wagle, op. cit., p. 156.
55. There are frequent references to the store-houses of the *gahapatis*. They also donated such store-houses to monks. These were known as *gahapati- kappiyabhūmi- kuṭi* or *gahapatikā*, *Sutta Piṭka*, III, pp.1163-64.
56. R.S. Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, p. 141.
57. Uma Chakarvarti, *Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, p. 73.
58. *Tantra-Vārttika* of Kumārila, Eng. tr., Poona, 1910; Uma Chakarvarti, *Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, p. 80, fn. 69.
59. *Dīgha Nikāya*, ed., T.W. Rhys Davids and J.E. Carpenter, 3 vols., PTS, London, 1890-1911, II, p. 131; *The Aṅguttara Nikāya*, pp. 241-42 speaks of a *kassaka-gahapati*.
60. Walter Ruben, "Some Problems of the Ancient Indian Republics" in *K.M. Ashraf Commemoration Volume*, Berlin, 1965, pp. 5-29.
61. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, vol. II, p. 182.
62. *Nidāna Kathā*, ed., Dharmananda Kosambi, Poona, 1915, pp. 72-73.
63. R.P. Kangle, *The Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, I, Bombay, 1970; II.35.8. Earlier, "free-peasants" or subsistence-farmers are designated as *karṣakas* and clubbed together with cowherds, traders, artisans, labourers and slaves. Cf. II.35.4. For references to *gṛhapatis* in the same context see ibid., V.3.22; XII.4.1; XIII.3.44.
64. *Gāthā Saptaśatī*, ed. and tr. Radhagovinda Basak, Calcutta, 1971, II.72; III.97; IV.59; V.7; VI.100.
65. Ibid., II.7.
66. *Daśakumāracarita*, VIII.207; *Mṛcchakaṭika*, II.14-15.8 quoted in Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v., *gṛhapati*.

4

On Bucolic Poetry in Ancient India and Europe*

WALTER RUBEN

In Europe it is usual since many centuries to deal with the so-called bucolic poetry, not so in India. Bucolic poetry can be defined as poetry about the love of a herdsman for a girl in beautiful natural setting accompanied by the tender music of his flute. The general European conception is that this type of poetry came into existence in Europe with the *Eidyllia* of the Hellenist poet Theokritos (living in Sicily in the first half of the third century BC) and was alive through the period of feudalism up to Goethe's short play *The Caprice of the Man in Love* or even up to our own times. In India the hero of bucolic poetry is Kṛṣṇa, the herdsman, who dances the *rāsa*-dance with the *gopīs*, the women and girls of the other herdsmen, in the beautiful nights of the autumn in Vṛndāvana, playing his flute. The beginning of this Kṛṣṇa-poetry, which has survived through the centuries in India, must be very old, older than Theokritos.

The main point of difference between Indian and European bucolic poetry is that Kṛṣṇa is Viṣṇu, one of the three greatest gods, and therefore the bucolic poetry of Kṛṣṇa is a religious one, in contrast to Europe. As such the religious bucolic poetry of ancient India is some kind of what K. Marx has called 'opium of the people'. This does not hold true for the European bucolic poetry, but in one respect they are similar: The European bucolic, like the Indian, tries to suggest to suffering mankind that there is some beautiful idyllic world with some happy people, which at least has been imagined or observed by poets through centuries. Thus the main purpose of bucolic poetry in India and Europe through 2500 years has been identical or at least very similar. This point is stressed here, because for understanding this poetry it is necessary, among other things, to make clear what the poet tries consciously or unconsciously to suggest to the recipient, namely, to console the people suffering in their daily life. The recipients of bucolic poetry must be and have been in India and Europe some fairly educated people, because the language of this poetry is and was not easy to understand. The European bucolics were written for highly educated people, and so were the Indian ones; for the Sanskrit of the Purāṇas, which deal with Kṛṣṇa and the bucolic episodes of his life, was and is intelligible to only a relatively small number of well educated people. However, this poetry was also enjoyed by the masses although we cannot yet explain the way this could be possible.

Here only some problems of Indian and European poetry can be dealt with. Let us start with the question of its beginning in India and Europe. In ancient

India Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, is mentioned for the first time in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[1] as the pupil of the Brahmin Ghora. The bucolic motif of this biography is not mentioned here, but he is learning some ethical conceptions which are dealt with only in Kṛṣṇa's famous *Bhagavadgītā*. Ghora may have lived in 600 BC when the ancient Indian class society seems to have come into being in the Ganga plain. About 600 BC the Aryans had conquered this area, and with the new class society a new religion had to begin, that of Hinduism, which took the place of the gentile Vedic magic and mythology of the Aryan tribes before they settled in the Ganga valley.

The ancient Greek analogy to Kṛṣṇa as regards his bucolics was the epic hero—Paris of Troy. The first of Homeric epics, the *Kypria* which preceded the *Illiad* and is lost, contained, according to the Greek tradition, a description of Paris and his love for the nymph Oinone. The King of Troy, Priamos, had been warned that Paris, whose birth was expected to take place soon, would destroy Troy and the kingdom of Priamos. The king therefore ordered the newborn child to be killed immediately, and Paris was exposed in the wilderness of the hills near Troy. But herdsmen found the child and brought it up so that Paris became a herdsman and as such fell in love with the nymph Oinone. All this is very similar to the childhood of Kṛṣṇa, but there is the difference that Kṛṣṇa loved a lot of herdswomen while Paris loved only one girl. This difference is characteristic of ancient Greek and Indian civilizations: the Hindus were polygamists, but the Greeks monogamists, probably the first monogamists in the history of mankind.

There is another point which is very similar in the epics which deal with Kṛṣṇa and Paris. Before Viṣṇu came down from his heaven to earth as Kṛṣṇa, the earth goddess had gone to Viṣṇu and had asked him for help; she had complained that she was overburdened by the masses of men and demons incorporated in men like Kaṃsa, and that she would sink into the ocean. Viṣṇu had assured her that he would be born as a man and hero who would kill all these demons and in this way help the earth. In a similar way in the *Kypria* Homeros told his countrymen that the earth goddess went to Zeus on the Olympos and asked for his help because the masses of the people wandering on her were so heavy that she feared to sink into the ocean. Zeus answered that he would arrange the war around Troy in order to kill the masses of people. Thus there cannot be any doubt that the epics of Paris and Kṛṣṇa had some connection. But in those old days about 700 BC there was no direct connection like trade between Indians and Greeks.

Now already in the beginning of our century two German Indologists, G. Husing and E. Windisch, have observed that the biographies of the young Kṛṣṇa and the young Kyros, the King of Persia (in the middle of the sixth century BC) were very similar to each other. And in 1925 W. Kirfel wrote a short paper against these two scholars suggesting that there might have been a time when these similar motives were not yet connected with Kṛṣṇa. But these three Indologists did not deal with the bucolics of Kṛṣṇa because the biography of Kyros, as it is preserved for us by the Greek historian Herodotos, does not do

so. Thus apparently there seems no connection between the bucolics dealing with Paris and Kṛṣṇa. But one cannot imagine that the motif of bucolics and that of the overburdened earth were combined in a Greek epic and in an Indian Purāṇa in the beginning of Greek and Indian class society at nearly the same time independently of each other. Therefore I propose the theory that there existed in Asia Minor an epic with the said bucolic element already before Kyros and this ancient hypothetical epic must have been older than Homeros (700 BC) and Kṛṣṇa-Ghora (about 600 BC). It is lost, but it must have been the source of Herodotos' biography of Kyros: the name of the original Persian hero is unknown. I think that this hypothetical epic, older than Homeros and Vyāsa, spread about 700/600 BC from Asia Minor to the Greeks in the west and to the Indians in the east. The cultivation of wheat and the use of iron for implements also spread from Asia Minor to the east and west in very ancient times, as did the conception of *yuga*-periods, found in the Purāṇas and in Hesiod's poetry nearly in the time of Homeros, and some other elements of civilization. The type of class society which we are accustomed to call the 'ancient oriental class society' developed in Asia Minor from the Sumerian up to the Persian empires and spread to India in the east, and at the same time also to Crete-Mycenae and even to the Etruscan in the west. Bucolic poetry began in Asia Minor, as it seems, already with the Sumerians and their class society—at least the hero Gilgamesh in his epic blamed the goddess Ishthar that she ruined several herdsmen (!) by her love. But there may have existed in Asia Minor at the time between the epic dealing with Ishthar and that dealing with the nameless predecessor of Kyros, a very old poem in which the love of a herdsman was dealt with in a positive way. Such a poem would be the link connecting the bucolic motif in the epics of Paris and Kṛṣṇa, a long time before Herodotos' biography of Kyros in which this motif is found no more (neither in the biography of Kyros nor much later in the *Shāhnāmā* of Firdausī). In the Gilgamesh epic the bucolic chapter ends with the interruption of the idyllic scene by a terrible bull, just as the demonic bull Ariṣṭa makes an end to the bucolic scene in the Kṛṣṇa epic. In this way a modern Indologist could try to reconstruct the connection between the Greek bucolic of Paris and the Indian one of Krsna before 700 BC. Homeros composed his *Kypria* probably nearly at the same time (the so- called epic poet) as Vyāsa his Purāna.

To reconstruct the development of the bucolic events in the biography of Krsna in several Purānas is another important topic. There must have existed an 'original Purāṇa' dealing with them, among other topics. By comparing and contrasting the respective *ślokas* of the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Brahma Purāṇas* one can reconstruct some text which must be similar to the lost 'original' Purāṇic text of the Krsna-*carita* or some textual version of it. In 1943 I tried to reconstruct in this way the whole biography of Krsna making use of these two Purāṇas as well as the *Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata* and *Brahmavaivarta Purānas*. The bucolic chapter of this hypothetical 'original' *Purāna* consisted only of five *ślokas*. The period of Indian history to which this 'original' Purāna belonged must have been the time about 600 BC when Kṛṣṇa, according to the *Chāndogya Upanisad*, was a pupil of Ghora. At this time the hypothetical bucolic text in

the epics of an unknown hero of Asia Minor must have reached India. For the beginning of Hinduism about 600 BC this hypothetical 'original' *Purāṇa* was basic.

The very short and very old 'original' text grew in the course of many centuries in some Purāṇas to the form in which we find it in the *Harivaṃśa-*, the *Brahma-*, *Viṣṇu-*, *Padma-* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the very long text of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. Writing down the *Harivaṃśa* may have begun in the Gupta period before which the Itihāsas and Purāṇas were handed down orally from generation to generation by bards. It is therefore likely that in the long period between 600 BC and AD 400 the bucolic parts grew enormously.

We have mentioned above that the Kṛṣṇa epics were composed as 'opium for the exploited masses of people' in the initial stage of class society about 600 BC. Who were these masses of the people? I propose to say that they were the pre-Aryan tribes who were suppressed by the conquering Aryans. In this connection we have to discuss the problem whether Kṛṣṇa had an Aryan or a pre-Aryan origin.

Pre-Aryan here does not mean the Harappan people but the gentile people whose remnants up to some years ago lived in Chota Nagpur and were partly settled in the Ganga plain in ancient times. Traditional Indologists did not make use of their cultures and traditions for reconstructing ancient Indian history. As a source of Hinduism they attach greatest importance to the *Ṛgveda*. Thus K. Chaitanya in 1962 remarked that Soma is described in the *Ṛgveda* 'as rejoicing in the streams like a young man sporting with graceful maidens', and that 'this topic later developed into the legends of Kṛṣṇa sporting with the maidens of Vṛndāvan'. Later on he translates the crucial Ṛgvedic stanza more correctly: "Soma was sporting with the streams..."; by the by he does not mention which topic of the Kṛṣṇa myth he has in mind. But the Ṛgvedic passage that a young man enjoys to be together with young girls is such a general phrase that there is no reason to combine it especially with Kṛṣṇa at this place. Chaitanya also contends that 'while Indra slays Vṛtra, the demon of drought, Kṛṣṇa slays Kāliya, the giant snake which dwelt in the waters of the Kālindī river'. He does not mention here why he connects Vṛtra with the snake Kāliya. Even if Vṛtra was regarded as a snake, Kāliya was no demon of drought. On the other hand, Chaitanya did not discuss the question whether Kṛṣṇa, the Black one, who in the *Ṛgveda* seems to be an enemy of the Aryas and who comes to attack them with a great army, is the Kṛṣṇa of the Hindu Purāṇas. In the same way S.G. Kantawala in 1979 quoted M.Winternitz to stress the point that 'Purāṇas are rooted in Vedic literature'. But are all the *pañcalakṣaṇas* of the Purāṇas or the *Vaṃśas* of the sun and the moon already found in the *Ṛgveda*? In contrast to such conceptions I propose to derive the Paurāṇic Kṛṣṇa from a pre-Aryan hero who wanders over the earth in order to kill wild animals as, for instance, a dangerous snake (similar to Kāliya).

From *c.* 600 BC onwards for one millennium there may have existed many bardic schools of the Kṛṣṇa-*carita*, till in Gupta times the archetypes of the epics and of several Purāṇas were written down, and it is a big problem how the

Kṛṣṇacaritas of the *Harivaṃśa* and the different Purāṇas developed out of their oral tradition.

It is impossible to deal in this paper with the Kṛṣṇa-*carita* in all the Purāṇas. But it may be mentioned that it seems that the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* developed out of the *Harivaṃśa*, and that from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* has to be derived. This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is certainly the most beautiful and moral description of Kṛṣṇa's life and his bucolic episodes in the Purāṇas. The description of the love of the *gopīs* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is certainly some kind of highly developed lyrics of love. For example in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*[2] Kṛṣṇa preached to them some kind of morals of love and at the same time developed something like an original theory of love. And when this Purāṇa describes how the whole nature is excited while listening to the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, this is certainly a most wonderful example of lyrics of nature.[3]

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* added a lot of new material to that of the older Purāṇas; it intended in this way to prolong the bucolics of Kṛṣṇa. In the 'original' text this bucolic episode went on for some nights only in the autumn. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, however, it went on for more than a year. It began in autumn and had its climax in the autumn of the following year.[4] In the course of this year among other actions, Kṛṣṇa, playing with the *gopīs*, once took away their clothes, when they were bathing in the river in winter time.[5] And in the summer following this winter, he made his co-herdsmen ask wives of brahmins to give them some food.[6] Both these episodes were introduced into Kṛṣṇa's biography by the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as it seems, to fill up the year between the beginning and the climax of the bucolic experiences of Kṛṣṇa.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*[7] adds an end to Kṛṣṇa's bucolic life : He had to leave the station of the cowherds in the forest because the despot of Mathura, Kaṇsa, had sent Akrūra to that station in order to carry Kṛṣṇa to the town where Kaṇsa wanted to kill him. When Kṛṣṇa together with his brother Balrāma is standing on the car of Akrūra, the *gopīs* come and lament that they will never see Kṛṣṇa again, that he is going to the town where the ladies of the town will capture his heart with their highly educated art of showing their love to him so that he will forget the rustic *gopīs*. And they are right to a certain extent: Kṛṣṇa does not come back to the *gopīs*, but not on account of his love for some highly educated ladies of the town but because he has come from heaven in order to kill some demons (the burden of the earth). The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* has not only described the bucolic life of Kṛṣṇa through a whole year but it has added to the older tradition a new beginning of the bucolic period of Kṛṣṇa and also its end which does not fit into the frame of only one year.

One gets the impression that the biography of Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is the work of a single poet, not of a lot of bards who developed it slowly during a long time before it was taken down to writing, as it happened with the older Purāṇas.

In the very late *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, some centuries after the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the love of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, especially of Rādhā, who is mentioned in this *Purāṇa* for the first time, went on since eternity and will go on in eternity.

This Purāṇa does not care for the one year of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, although it has accepted all the additions made by it to the older Purāṇas. Here Krsna is the highest god, he is *ātman*, the pure cosmic spirit, and Rādhā is matter (*prakṛti*). Kṛṣṇa is very much greater than Viṣṇu, and Kṛṣṇa's heaven, the Goloka, is the highest of all heavens, higher than Vaikuṇṭha, the heaven of Viṣṇu. One is tempted to say that the bucolics of Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* were the climax, if compared to those of the other Purāṇas, and that the bucolic topic is dealt with in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* in a much longer, but inferior, way than in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. While in the latter it is a document of a highly developed moral and poetical spirit, in the former it is a document of what one might sometimes call, theological nonsense, expressed in bad Sanskrit. One is further tempted to imagine that the Kṛṣṇa-*carita* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as well as in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* are the works of a single author, in contrast to the *Harivaṃśa*, the *Brahma Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu-* and *Padma Purāṇa*, which are the work of generations of bards. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is written, as it seems, by a real poet, the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* by a hardworking theologian.

At all events, a strange evolution in the description of Kṛṣṇa's bucolic experiences from only some days in autumn in the 'original' text of the Purāṇas (especially in the *Harivaṃśa* and *Brahma Purāṇa*) to one year in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and to eternity in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* took place, and this evolution happened in the course of certainly more than thousand years.

As an example of theological nonsense in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* one can quote the important description of how Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā went from their heaven, the Goloka, down to earth. The traditional reason from the 'original' text onwards was the complaint of the goddess of the earth that she was overburdened. Before the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* deals with the topic, it tells a new story—an invention of the author of the text—of how Rādhā, living in the Goloka, was cursed by a certain Śrīdāman, that she would be born on earth. Before this myth, it tells a corresponding one, how Kṛṣṇa was cursed by a certain Sudāman to be born on earth. The author gives no hint how the hearer should combine these three myths. The myth of Rādhā's curse is told in the second, the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, and Rādhā is *prakṛti*. The myth of Kṛṣṇa and Sudāman is told in the fourth, the Kṛṣṇa-khaṇḍa, together with the myth of the overburdened earth, which properly speaking had nothing to do with that myth. Such a combination of different myths which is quite a nonsense here, is not to be found in other Purāṇas.

This ancient myth of the overburdened earth and the coming down of Kṛṣṇa from his heaven in order to help her is connected in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*[8] with that of Viṣṇu who in the shape of a boar lifted the earth from the bottom of the sea where it had sunk. There are a lot of variants of this myth of the overburdened earth. In the *Mahābhārata*,[9] for instance, it is told, that in the first, the happy age of the world, mankind did not die; on account of that the overburdened earth sank (it is not said in *expressis-verbis* that she sank into the ocean); she went to Nārāyana and asked him for help because she was

overburdened. He in the form of a boar helped her. The *avatāra* as a boar was Viṣṇu's third *avatāra*, that as Kṛṣṇa his eighth. His third *avatāra* happened in the Kṛta age, but Krsna as a man lived much later, at the end of the Dvāpara age. Such a mixing up of two quite different *avatāraś* in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* is certainly to be regarded as an unpardonable nonsense. This *Purāṇa* is unique with its doctrine that Krsna came down to earth from his own heaven, the Goloka. The general doctrine was that Viṣṇu (!) came down to earth as Kṛṣṇa (besides his other *avatāras*). How is the contradiction between this late *Purāṇa* and all the other Vaiṣṇava texts to be explained? Could this also be some mythological nonsense peculiar to this text? Was it the doctrine of a particular Vaiṣṇava sect? Rādhā, the new *gopī* of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, who was the especially beloved *gopī* of Kṛṣṇa, has some problems for us too. Kṛṣṇa from the very beginning was a polygamist; therefore his most beloved Rādhā had to be jealous again and again. In the above text it is said that already in the Goloka Rādhā was jealous of the river goddess Gaṅgā as well as of the Virajā who on account of the jealousy of Rādhā became a river. Krsna could not help these two unfortunate women, Gaṅgā and Virajā.[10] One may imagine that this jealousy was easily understood and as a topic of Krsna's bucolic life was liked by the Indian hearer who was acquainted with polygamy and its everyday problems. On the other hand Krsna in Gokula was an ordinary herdsman and had to suffer all the hardships of the life of such a man. But the jealousy of the *gopīs* of Vrndāvana was never so extreme that it came to such curses. It is left to the hearer to imagine how this basic element of Krsna's bucolic life in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* will appear later on, when Krsna and Rādhā have returned to heaven to continue their bucolic life for eternity.

A new topic in the biography of Krsna in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāna* is his marriage with Rādhā. When Krsna was still a very small boy who had just stolen the butter of his mother, his foster-father, the herdsman Nanda, went one day to the forest with his cattle, carrying Krsna with him. He sat down under a tree, the child on his lap. Krsna, it is not said, why suddenly by his *māyā* made the heaven dark with clouds. Nanda wanted the child to be carried home, and he doubted whether he should stay in the forest with his cattle or not. At this moment Rādhā came: Nanda saluted her devotedly and addressed her. He was astonished to see her in the forest where there were no other human beings. He said to her that he knew her from the prophetic speeches of the saint Garga (who once had initiated Krsna. Had Garga told him that Rādhā would be the beloved and even the wife of Krsna?). He asked her to take the child and to carry it home. Later when he had returned with the cattle, she should give it back to him. Here it must be mentioned that in the very beginning of the *Gītagovinda* Nanda also delivers the small child Krsna to Rādhā because she should carry him home. Thus, it seems that Rādhā in these texts is much older than her lover Kṛṣṇa. Or has the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* not thought of this problem? In these two texts which are certainly interconnected in some way, the foster-father Nanda without wishing or even suspecting the bucolic love of Krsna and Rādhā, is the first cause for their love. A marriage proper of the couple is never described; nevertheless, this chapter of the text[11] has the title 'The Marriage of Krsna and

Rādhā', though no ceremony of marriage is described there. In this context one must also mention one of the small poems of Hāla in which Yaśodā says to the *gopīs* that the small Kṛṣṇa is not yet in a position to love; the *gopīs* silently look at the boy and smile—they know better.

At all events one gets the impression that the author of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* wanted to make the hearer think that it was not immoral if Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā (and the other *gopīs*) after this marriage enjoyed their bucolic love. This simple-minded intention of the author of the text can be contrasted with the moral speech of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* with which Kṛṣṇa receives the *gopīs* in the forest. Immediately after this seemingly moral speech Kṛṣṇa starts his love with the *gopīs*. This means that the illuminated author of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* made Kṛṣṇa in his innermost heart laugh at his own openly proclaimed 'morals'.

According to the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* Rādhā took Kṛṣṇa from Nanda (and carried him deeper into the forest?), she kissed him and remembered the dancing-place in the Goloka. In the forest she suddenly saw a marvellous palace, entered it and saw a beautiful young man of blue colour, lying there on a bed of flowers in a yellow robe, apparently Kṛṣṇa. She had not remarked that, in the meantime, the small boy Kṛṣṇa had disappeared from her lap and (by his *māyā*?) had changed into that young man, ready for love. He asked her to remember the Goloka (what she had just done). There is no hint whether Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā got married in the palace in the forest—at least there is no festival or ceremony of marriage. This is some strange type of child marriage insofar as the boy, and not the girl, was still a child (at least in the forest). Did this marriage, therefore, happen in the palace where Kṛṣṇa had presented himself to Rādhā as a young man? Both these meetings of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are told in the same chapter of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*[12] which is called 'The Marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā'.

The point that Rādhā meets Kṛṣṇa suddenly in a palace may be connected with another episode peculiar to the above text, which is told after (not before!) the above-mentioned chapter. Two chapters after the event in the palace[13] it is told how one day the supreme teacher of all handicrafts came to Vṛndāvana with a lot of (partially demoniacal) workers and built there a marvellous town, thinking of Kṛṣṇa. Among other buildings, he built a marvellous palace for the father of Rādhā in which she was born. Did she meet and marry Kṛṣṇa in this building because it was her own palace? And much later than in the forest? Or is the palace in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*[14] another one as mentioned above?

REFERENCES

* This is the first draft of the paper which unfortunately Professor Ruben could not complete on account of his sudden death. (Editor).

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2. *Bh.P.*, X, 32.
3. Ibid., X, 35.
4. Ibid., X, 21 and 29.
5. Ibid., X, 22.
6. Ibid., X, 22, 23, and 29.
7. Ibid., X, 39.
8. *Bvai. P.*, IV, 4.
9. *Mbh.*, III,14.
10. *Bvai.P.*, II, 11.
11. Ibid., IV, 15.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 17.
14. Ibid., 15.

5

Trade and the Nature of Historical Change in the Mid-Godavari Valley, 200 BC-AD 200*

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In recent years it has become common to write regional history wherein 'region' is essentially defined in a geographical sense and further, made to correspond to the present-day linguistic states of modern India.[1] There are several reasons why such studies have become popular, one of the most dominant being to de-emphasize the over-enthusiastic consideration hitherto paid to writing Ganges valley-centric north Indian histories.[2] The relevant point in this context is, however, not to delve into these reasons but to try and re-assess the role of micro-level studies in understanding the history of the country as a whole. A small step in this direction is the present case study of the nature of social change in the mid-Godavari valley during the early historical period.

Much as we have got used to writing about the history of north and south India as two separate entities, stress on the study of change over periods, particularly its economic aspects, must take into account the overlapping time scales and contiguous regional developments to unveil the specificity of the historical transformation. This means that on the one hand, not all regions or sub-regions subscribe to rigid chronological or conceptual frameworks, on the other, though regions are deeply rooted in the geographical context and cultural specificity of particular entities, from the positive angle, they must nonetheless be viewed as part of a larger system.

There has emerged a gradual but deliberate concern that the character of historical development in India is basically dependent on geographical and consequently, techno-economic variations.[3] Even within the physiographic entity of the Deccan taken as a whole these have led to an uneven socio-cultural development in its different parts, and these variations can be traced as early as the late stone age, mesolithic and neolithic settlements.[4] To unveil the complex historical process of transition from pre-history to history and in specific terms identify and label stages of development, we must necessarily confine this study to a limited geographical area, that is, to the geo-political region of the central Deccan or the mid-Godavari valley. This was an important area of linguistic and cultural transition south of the Vindhyas and at the same time was also an area with an almost permanent habitation of tribal groups from pre-historic times. During the early historic period, especially in the late centuries BC we discern that some of these tribes, or parts of them, had to adjust to the pressures of

civilization and one of the major factors which brought about this change was the expansion of trade in the Deccan as a whole during this period.

The Deccan is generally understood to be the region south of the Vindhyas up to the Krishna-Tungabhadra valley.[5] Even geographically speaking, this is not a homogeneous entity. Geologically the whole area is marked by very old formations called the Deccan trap. The Plateau as such is roughly divided into two major components, that north of the river Krishna and that south of it. To the east are the low lying areas of the coastal belt and this is marked by the large expanses of the Krishna-Godavari deltas. This alluvial expanse constitutes the agricultural nucleus of the region.[6] Apart from these broad physiographic divisions the Deccan has been understood variously by historians and archaeologists[7] mainly because of the availability of data that enables the description of the pre-historic and early historic environments. To a substantial extent this has largely determined the characterization of the whole region into sub-regions of western Deccan, eastern Deccan, Andhra, southern Deccan and the like. It would be wrong to suggest that such divisions were consciously delineated. Thus, for instance, the neolithic-chalcolithic cultures in the Deccan on the whole have many common features but sites attributed to these are concentrated in either western Deccan, that is, between the Narmada and Bhima rivers in the present-day state of Maharashtra, or, in southern Deccan in the area that cuts across the present day Andhra-Karnataka border around the Krishna-Tungabhadra basin.[8] Further, in the transition to the early historic period the latter became a significant area of attraction for the maximum number of Aśokan inscriptions, south of the Vindhyas, to have been located here around the third century BC.[9] Similarly, in the western Deccan, the late centuries BC and the early centuries AD are marked by a large concentration of Buddhist cave temples located near strategic trade routes.[10] It has, therefore, been almost natural for a large number of studies to concentrate on understanding the historical processes of change in these parts by undertaking specific studies of the same.[11]

In contrast to the western and the southern Deccan, the Krishna-Godavari deltaic region, has indeed attracted the most attention. In writing about the art and life of Āndhra Deśa, Amita Ray rightly suggests that these two rivers played the most important role in the evolution of civilization in the entire region,[12] and this was possible because of the high fertility of the soil which in turn led to a high density of population in these parts. There is no denying the fact that this became the core area of early historical activity and has, therefore, also attracted the greatest amount of archaeological activity for the past three decades or so.[13] However, as has been recently admitted by H. Sarkar, a field archaeologist of long standing, "when sites like Amaravati, Bhattiprolu or Salihundam were excavated our emphasis had been on individual buildings or groups of sculptures and we had only vague idea about the social and economic dynamics operating behind the rise and fall of a township or settlement. . . . A proper approach should have been to study the entire area as an organic whole. . . ."[14]

This confession is relevant on a broader plane as well when applied to the relationship, for instance, between the western Deccan and the Krishna-Godavari deltaic region. It is even more crucial when one realizes that the importance of the mid-Godavari valley or the central Deccan (also known as the Hyderabad-Telangana Plateau region), has been unconsciously undermined in this relationship. Its physiographic features may not stand out startlingly except in the negative that it is a rocky and poor agricultural area and many parts of it, particularly in the north, are bordered by forests.[15] Defining the region by the flow of the river, in the west one could delimit it by the location of Paithan, an important city of early historical times, and in the east up to the famous religious place of Bhadrachalam from where it then flows into the eastern ghats. During this course it is joined by its important tributaries, the Pūrṇā, the Māñjrā, the Prānhitā, the Indrāvatī and Śabarī. More specifically, this eco-zone lies roughly between longitude 77-80° and the latitude 19-17° north[16] identifiable mainly with the districts of Karimnagar and Warangal, and partly also the districts of Nizamabad and Medak[17] in the Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh. In ancient literary texts this region has been described as Aśmaka or Assaka located on the Godavari. This was supposed to be contiguous to the regions of Mūlaka, identified as the present districts of Nasik-Poona, Aurangabad, Osmanabad and Ahmednagar, and to Asika, that is, the region between the Godavari and the Krishna.[18] That Aśmaka had its own geo-cultural identity even for the early writers is important to note in the present context. We also wish to stress that it was the interlink between these three geographical regions that played a crucial role during and after the rise of Sātavāhana power in these parts.

Hitherto many of the studies on the history of this region have principally been concerned with the reconstruction of dynastic history.[19] Thus most accounts are interwoven along the exploits of the Sātavāhana rulers in the vicissitudes they faced in empire-building. Within this perspective there continues an inconclusive debate on the chronological problems of the Sātavāhana rule[20] and the question of their original home.[21] With regard to the latter the major opinions had polarized to either propounding their origin in the western Deccan or the eastern Deccan. But as early as 1961, on the basis of new numismatic evidence, Rama Rao forcefully argued that Telengana was the starting place of Sātavāhana rule.[22] The importance of the central Deccan as the core area of the Sātavāhana power has been reiterated on the basis of fresh evidence of more early Sātavāhana coins found here, as also on the basis of extensive archaeological work done in this region during the past decade or so.[23]

The period under discussion focuses on those centuries when the entire Deccan region, and indeed the whole of India, was affected by the long distance trade developed between India and the Graeco-Roman world. It must then be submitted that there is an intrinsic relationship between geographical configuration, the rise and nature of particular cultures and the contact between contiguous sub-regions through the internal and external dynamics of trade. It is not our intention here to review the entire gamut of trade links in the Deccan, nor tread on the much hackneyed track of describing the guilds that flourished in

this part of the country during the early historical period.[24] Foreign literary and inscriptional sources for both western Deccan and the Krishna-Godavari deltaic region have in the past furnished us enough evidence on internal trade as well as trade with the Graeco-Roman world. Indeed, it is on the basis of these well-known facts that one can conclude on some general presumptions about the mechanisms of trade and its network[25] and its socio-economic and cultural repercussions.[26]

In order to recognize that trade and the commercial economy in general were a crucial factor in sustaining the economic and political base in the mid-Godavari valley we must first address ourselves to an intrinsic description of the material surface of change and stability during the period of our study. Apart from enabling us to understand how it resulted in the break of kinship patterns,[27] more importantly, it enables us to look at one of the integral parts of the socio-economic structure of the early Deccan in specific terms, rather than consider it to be one monolithic structure.

To place the mid-Godavari valley in archaeological perspective one has to highlight the fact that this area reveals sites that range from lower palaeolithic and mesolithic to the neolithic and megalithic.[28] It has been further noted that in this region most of the lower and middle palaeolithic sites are found on the red sandy or clayey soils, mesolithic ones on both the red and black soils, and neolithic, megalithic and Sātavāhana sites generally found on black sticky or brown soils.[29] What is of significance regarding the sequence of these cultures is that there is a notable absence of chalcolithic sites. Secondly, as we shall see a little later, microliths are associated not only with hunting and gathering cultures but have also been found associated with the historical layers. These are of course commonly found in other parts of the Deccan and south India, associated with chalcolithic levels—a fact which Allchin explains in terms of the shortage of copper and bronze.[30] However, both in the western Deccan and the deltaic region of the Krishna-Godavari, the neolithic-chalcolithic phase can be identified with craft specialization and rudimentary trade.[31] The origin and growth of the internal distribution and communication system, particularly with regard to the exchange of objects commonly used in daily activities, is crucial to our understanding of the pre-state situation as a whole and more so, the relationship between nomadic and sedentary groups. Writing in the context of a different region Clarence Maloney has rightly pointed out that the appearance of microliths just below the evidence of food production "heralds a rather abrupt cultural change and may represent intrusive influence".[32]

In a micro-level analysis of the region under consideration, we would like to pose a few pertinent questions, a plausible answer to which shall form the essence of this paper:

1. On a broader plane is there a coordinated picture of transition from the pre-Sātavāhana to the Sātavāhana layers of habitation at the sites associated with the Sātavāhanas?

2. How extensive was the use of iron in weaponry and agricultural implements during both these phases?
3. How can the prosperity of some of the Sātavāhana sites be explained in the light of the above and on the strength of their association with Roman antiquities?

Since this paper is a preliminary enquiry we cannot give exhaustive answers to the above questions. However, it is possible to highlight the essential trends of historical change. We begin with a description of the culture sequence at some of the important sites that reveal a relationship of the historic phase with the pre-historic, and then take up the nature of their growth as important economic centres.

One is being selective in choosing these sites though, as has been clearly pointed out by the excavators, the frequency of historical mounds with Sātavāhana remains in almost every alternate village in the taluks of Warangal and Karimnagar districts cannot be missed and indicates that the area was densely populated.[33] In another context it is expressed that "it is really puzzling to find why they are mainly concentrated in the Karimnagar region",[34] though this has been explained in terms of the area being a 'political nucleus' or a 'commercially important region, traversed by the ancient trade routes'. What is ignored in the explanations thus given is the role the antecedent cultures played in this development.

Of the major sites Peddabankur and Kotalingala are both in the Paddapalli taluk of Karimnagar district. So also is Dhulikatta, situated about 10 km from Paddabankur.[35] On the other hand, Kondapur[36] is situated in Medak district about 70 km from Hyderabad, but it has similar features. Polakonda in Warangal district and Kadambapur in Karimnagar district (very near the first three sites mentioned) are important in that their neolithic stages are of significance, but they are relatively less impressive in the historical period. Further, they are both important megalithic sites as well. Finally, Pochampad, lying to the west of all these on the river Godavari, indicating the border of Nizamabad and Adilabad districts, is a substantial megalithic site.[37]

Of all these, Kondapur is the only one where evidence can be traced back to the middle stone age and it has been postulated that it was a factory site for blades and flakes.[38] Microliths of the late stone age are also evidenced here and in archaeological terms this site becomes important again with the introduction of iron.[39] Though palaeolithic and mesolithic materials are not available from any of the sites under consideration, it is well-recognized that the Karimnagar region in general is rich in evidence available for these cultures, particularly spread around the river Godavari and its tributaries.[40] This is indicative of a very substantial food gathering economy that persisted in these parts from very early times. Significantly, Peddabankur, another important iron age site along with megalith burials, has interesting antecedents. It was a neolithic site of considerable scale because of the scores of ground stone tools found here,[41] and more importantly, the early historical phase also shows neolithic axes and microlith implements.[42] Besides it has also yielded considerable amount of

megalith related material like horse remains, tools and implements of iron, cattle-remains and so on.[43] The continuity of the cultures thus is striking here and very clearly, there is an indication of the overlap of cultures. In a region which even today borders the tribal areas, it is not unusual to postulate that there was an interdependence between different kinds of subsistence patterns. This may perhaps be one of the reasons that leads the excavator to describe Peddabankur as a 'Sātavāhana village'.[44]

The neolithic stage in the region is best exemplified with the excavated material from Polakonda which reveals two phases of stage I of the neolithic and where the late neolithic has been radio-carbon dated to 1300 BC.[45] This site also has an important megalith area, the burials being situated 1 km away from the habitation and in the proximity of large irrigation tanks.[46] Interestingly, the historical site here is to the north of the village and has three levels of occupation—pre-Sātavāhana, Sātavāhana and medieval.[47] Unlike Peddabankur which stands out for its historical remains, Polakonda has rich neolithic material but at both the sites the continuity of settlement, whether of the local indigenous people or outside immigrants, is an important feature. However, in contrast to both these, is the site of Kadambapur. Its location in the midst of important historical sites of Dhulikatta, Kotalingala and Peddabankur gives it added significance, first as a neolithic settlement and then as a megalithic burial site.[48] Though there are no historical remains available from Kondapur, the megalith material is rich in the usual iron objects and Black and Red ware vessels. The site also lies in the proximity of irrigation tanks.[49] Kadambapur has itself no significant historical phase but there are other sites in and around this area as Karnamamidi situated on the north bank of the river Godavari in Adilabad district, and Chinnabankur 4 km north of Paddabankur, in Karimnagar district, which are only known to us as early historical sites.[50]

Pochampad and perhaps Kadambapur, are most representative of megalithic sites in the region. Krishnasastry has noted that both of them have burial furniture in conformity with that of Vidarbha.[51] The repertoire of iron objects pertaining to war, agriculture and household activity at these and other megalithic sites tells us of the extent and diversity of its imposition on the neolithic sites as well as the general implications of the use of iron technology for agriculture and craft production. Weapons include daggers, knives, wedge-shaped blades, lances, spear-heads with barbs, arrow- heads, swords of single and double edge and amidst all this, significant pieces of horse bits and stirrups need to be mentioned. While skeletal remains of horse were found at Pocham-pad, bits of saddlery in the form of curb-chains have been found at the megalithic levels of Paddabankur.[52] Again while agricultural implements such as flat-axes, sickles, spades, hoe-blades, knives have been found at many sites, at Pochampad and Paddabankur in particular, the bone remains of such domesticated animals as cattle, sheep, goat, swine probably indicate that these formed part of their diet.[53] However, by far the most striking aspect of the megalithic economy is its ability to generate iron objects on a large scale. This is undoubtedly related to the development of iron technology and its availability in this region. It has

been pointed out that a "number of ancient iron working spots were located in Karimnagar region at Regonda, Tellakunta, etc." At the latter site enormous deposits of iron slags and nodules of calcium carbonate indicate this. Indeed here "the entire hill range is scattered with iron ore".[54]

Peddabankur, Dhulikatta, Kondapur and Kotalingala are all important Sātavāhana sites particularly because of the coins and other associated remains found at these places. The first three have a considerable amount of iron objects present, and the first two have along with it, megaliths and All Black Ware pottery.[55] At Kotalingala iron slags and ore are found in plenty, and it is here that the biggest mound of about 50 hectares in extent and 6 metres above the plains, encompassed by a mud fort has been excavated. Of even greater significance is the fact that it is from here that coins of King Cimukha, "founder of the Sātavāhana dynasty", were collected.[56] The bricks used for structures excavated here measured 50-55 cm long. These structures on the north side of the fort along the course of the river indicate the presence of a wharf according to the excavator. On both the right and left banks of the Godavari, Kotalingala is surrounded by small early historical sites, and at Veunnuru, a site of 3-4 hectares, "the presence of iron slag and iron ore may indicate the existence of an indigenous iron industry".[57] The defence structures at Kotalingala as well as its location hint at its political and commercial importance simultaneously.

Dhulikatta is literally supposed to mean a mud fort, being a corrupt form of Dhulikota. The settlement, 18 hectares in extent, was fortified with two huge brick-built gateways and outside the fort there was a deep moat.[58] The most outstanding structural monument discovered and excavated here, dated to the last quarter of the third century BC, is a Buddhist stūpa.[59] It has been pointed out that the beginnings of Buddhism at Dhulikatta was possibly pre-Sātavāhana because no anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha is found here and further, it is ideally situated on the basis of Śāstraic instructions, that is on the crossing of roads accessible to a city.[60] It is of some significance that besides being situated and surrounded by fertile black soil, it was also well connected with places like Nagarjunakonda and Dhanakaṭaka which were not only seats of Buddhism but were also commercial centres.[61] According to Amita Ray, Dhulikatta's role as a trade centre cannot be denied on the basis of silver Roman coins found here, but by the third century AD it had receded into a village life.[62]

In contrast to Dhulikatta described by Krishnasastry as a full-fledged "walled town of the Andhras", Paddebankur is regarded by him as a "Sātavāhana village".[63] On the other hand, Amita Ray opines that "Paddabankur represents a curious amalgam, indicating occurrence of continuous habitation from the neolithic- chalcolithic period onwards".[64] On the basis of the early reports on Peddabankur, Margabandhu has noted that there are two phases of structural development at this site; the early period dated to *c.* 250 -100 BC and that which continues into the Sātavāhana period, that is, *c.* 50 BC-AD 200,[65] However, apart from the structural remains at Paddabankur, there are two significant finds that determine its character. On the one hand, "a series of square and rectangular cisterns and brick platform with pieces of iron slag and

two ovens indicate it to be a blacksmith's forge''.[66] On the other hand, the site and its surrounding areas are covered by alluvial black soil exposing at places a microlithic industry.[67] This in no way undermines Paddabankur's importance as a production centre of particularly iron goods[68] and the fact that scores of punch-marked silver coins, Roman *denari* and Sātavāhana coins have been found here leads to the conclusion that it was also probably a mint centre.[69] In fact, it may aptly be described as a 'market town'.[70]

As an urban centre Kondapur was perhaps the first to be excavated in the region under consideration.[71] Though some religious and secular buildings have been excavated here, they were architecturally not very imposing.[72] However, as at Paddabankur large earthen water basins with two furnaces and innumerable iron objects like sickles, chisels, nails, knives, spearheads, hoes, forks and also possibly a plough-share have been found.[73] A common feature at all these sites is the discovery of a variety of coins of different denominations and Kondapur is no exception to this where lead and potin coins of some of the Sātavāhana kings and a gold Roman coin of Emperor Augustus have been reported.[74] It has been suggested by scholars that this site as well as Kotalingala and Paddabankur, were mint centres.[75] At Paddabankur I.K. Sarma deduces this on the basis of a large number of terracotta coin moulds found in stratified deposits and the existence of hundreds of small die-struck pieces in pots. As mentioned above, it is also at this site that two hoards of silver punch-marked coins, one of 168 and the other of 30 coins, have been found. This is part of at least 418 punch-marked silver coins discovered in the Karimnagar region, as also of the Nusthulpur hoard which is associated with a number of Roman coins.[76] It may be mentioned here that of the five Roman coins found at Paddabankur, four were imitation ones with double perforations which were therefore used probably as suspended around the neck.[77]

The most startling and valuable discovery has, however, been that of about 160 coins actually found by farmers during their filling operations at Kotalingala.[78] Thousands of Sātavāhana coins had been discovered all over the Deccan but till the Kotalingala find, none had been that of Simuka (Cimukha Sātavāhana),[79] who was in all likelihood the founder of the dynasty and his name also occurs variously spelt in the Purāṇas as the first member of the Andhra dynasty.[80] Apart from this, several non-Sātavāhana coins were also discovered, and their analysis by several scholars reveals a new vista of the history of this region. Thus, the coins of King Gobhadra and Samagopa have been identified by Parabrahma Sastry as most likely belonging to the Śuṅga rulers of Vidisha who exercised their authority in these parts and to whom the early Sātavāhanas were subordinates.[81] On a broader plane Ajayamitra Shastri further points out that the coins of these two kings, as of some others, have also been found in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra and concludes that palaeographical, typological and other considerations lead us to attribute these coins and the ruling chiefs represented by them to the pre-Sātavāhana period, though we cannot be quite sure about their family affiliations and exact date.[82] It may be recalled here, as stated above, that Krishnasastry had noted that the megalithic burial furniture

found at places like Pochampad and Kadambapur was similar to that found in Vidarbha.

A diversion into discussing the salient features of these coins is necessary, not so much to prove that political nucleus of Sātavāhana power was the mid-Godavari valley as to highlight the continued importance of the local currency systems. Even after the collapse of the Mauryan network of trade in these parts, the regional economy of trade was continued with sometimes legendless and sometimes inscribed coins in cheap metals of copper, lead and potin. In other cases, as at Paddabankur, the silver punch-marked coins found in substantial quantity, continued to hold sway. The existence of a varied coinage itself indicates the magnitude and nature of commercial transactions in terms of its diversity which in turn reflects the prosperity of the region. On the whole, the intensive excavations and exploration work done here in recent years reveals in material terms that the region was throbbing with economic activity. We shall next turn to a brief discussion and examination of the nature of this activity and its implications.

The beginnings of long distance trade in the peninsula is in many ways related to the flowering of urban centres in the Ganga valley during the first millennium BC, which under the Mauryan hegemony initiated processes of far-reaching implications. It has been convincingly argued that the distribution of Aśokan inscriptions particularly in southern Deccan and the Krishna-Godavari deltaic region in fact reveals the economic exploitation of the rich mineral resources of the Deccan.[83] However, it was only in the post-Mauryan period that the internal dynamics of social change could accelerate change on a wider scale in these parts. This meant that local groups participated in those spheres of economic activity like trade and commodity production in a more intensive manner which hitherto the Mauryan state machinery had controlled.[84]

It is generally accepted that urban centres emerged in the Deccan only during the early centuries AD.[85] In general terms, it has been pointed out by N.R. Banerjee that there was a lack of prosperity and that there was no "urban bias of the megalithic builders" of south India.[86] However, the diffusion of iron technology that unleashed the spread of agriculture and other socio-economic and political processes was a necessary backdrop against which village settlements could expand and flourish as urban centres. Thus in the mid-Godavari valley, as we have shown above, the expansion of an agrarian base was very much linked to the proliferation of megalithic settlements and to the frequency of historical sites, either over them or independent of them but in their vicinity. But this expansion has to be understood in the context of the limited ecological base of the region which even today is not very fertile. Even earlier the neolithic-chalcolithic agrarian base that was established worked out its own economic system in the specificity of the ecological conditions and where the use of copper was limited. Consequently, therefore, the impact of the use and distribution of iron technology must necessarily be understood in the context of how these well-settled communities interacted with each other and with the largely tribal populations that inhabited the region as a whole.[87] Further, it has

been pointed out that neither the inscriptions nor the explorations and excavations have revealed any large scale agricultural operations for the Deccan as a whole, though the mention of irrigation tanks, agricultural labour, *gahapatis* and the intensification of village settlements must mean that the socio-economic base was primarily fed by agriculture.[88] We would like to emphasize in this context that particularly in the mid-Godavari valley, the tribal economy was very slowly giving way to an agricultural one and, therefore, trade in these parts was stimulated not so much by the export of an agricultural surplus but by the supply of iron objects and other related commodities which were produced in the area.

The material remains from many of the sites discussed above implies the existence of social groups involved in the process of smelting and forging iron. We have already mentioned some of the iron tools and implements found at these places, but more striking is the evidence of how this technology worked. In explaining the different methods of producing steel, Krishnasastry shows how one of them probably operated at Dhulikatta where a crucible of iron, 15 cm in diameter, was found. "Considerable amount of charred wood, leafy material and mud, besides big well-burnt terracotta cake were found adhered to the concave crucible", and this he says "may go to prove that iron and steel metallurgy was practised as a home industry".[89] Further, at Paddabankur, the evidence of a terracotta forge, measuring 20 cm in diameter, gives interesting indication of how the forging of iron was done and the fact that "the working floor of the forge was thickly embedded with fragments of iron slag" along with associated finished products such as iron nails, a sickle, a knife and a ring gives graphic description of the work place of a blacksmith.[90] At Kondapur too, Yazdani had noted furnaces and large cooling basins.[91] All this along with the numismatic evidence discussed above, confirms that many of these towns were mint centres and that there was a powerful organization of commercial groups.

A substantial, though not very extensive, agrarian base, circulation of money and organized craft production were the three pillars on which the local power structure rested, and on which the survival of the prosperity of the region as a whole depended. Judging by the information from the western Deccan, it appears that there was a link between the ruling houses and the guilds even though the former may not have controlled them.[92] R.S. Sharma further points out that members of the merchant families held administrative posts under the ruling families.[93] Finally, on the basis of the widespread existence of microliths even in the historical layers of habitation, we must conclude that tribal nomadic populations were also integrated into the new economic system to some extent. Their role has been hitherto neglected in understanding the mechanisms of trade but even till recent times pastoral/nomadic communities are known to have supplemented the agriculturists, "their movements being guided by the needs of trade".[94] On a larger canvas the mid-Godavari valley was crucially linked to the prosperity of towns both in the western Deccan and the Krishna-Godavari delta. One of the arterial routes that connected these two regions passed through Kondapur on its way to Ter and beyond, and the other touched Dhulikatta on

its way to Vidisha or Ujjain.[95] This must have activated inland trade that was already present in the locality and further inspired the growth of new centres of activity. This would explain the existence of so many historical sites clustered together in the mid-Godavari valley, though many of them could not, strictly speaking, be called urban centres. In the context of long distance trade, the legendary quality of 'wootz' steel that was exported from India to many countries, probably originated from the iron ore producing centres of the central Deccan.[96] Direct and indirect relations of trade with the mid-Godavari valley thus effected the internal dynamics of social change here and further strengthened economic structures of commodity production. Due to the geo-cultural and techno-economic constraints and possibilities the individual character of these would certainly be different from similar centres in western Deccan or coastal Andhra, as also from other parts of India.

It has been observed that it was this realization of the importance of commerce, that made the Sātavāhana kings, unlike their north Indian contemporaries, issue coins with their names inscribed on them.[97] It thus needs to be reiterated that the earliest of the inscribed coins have been found in the Karimnagar region. It would then not be an exaggeration to state that it was the capacity of the region to maintain networks of trade and production through the growing strength of local elites in spite of whom the Sātavāhanas were able to establish the nucleus of an empire. Their emergent rule provided a significant contact between various tribal enclaves, each self-sufficient but all directly under the new forces of social change unleashed by expanding agriculture and mercantile activities.

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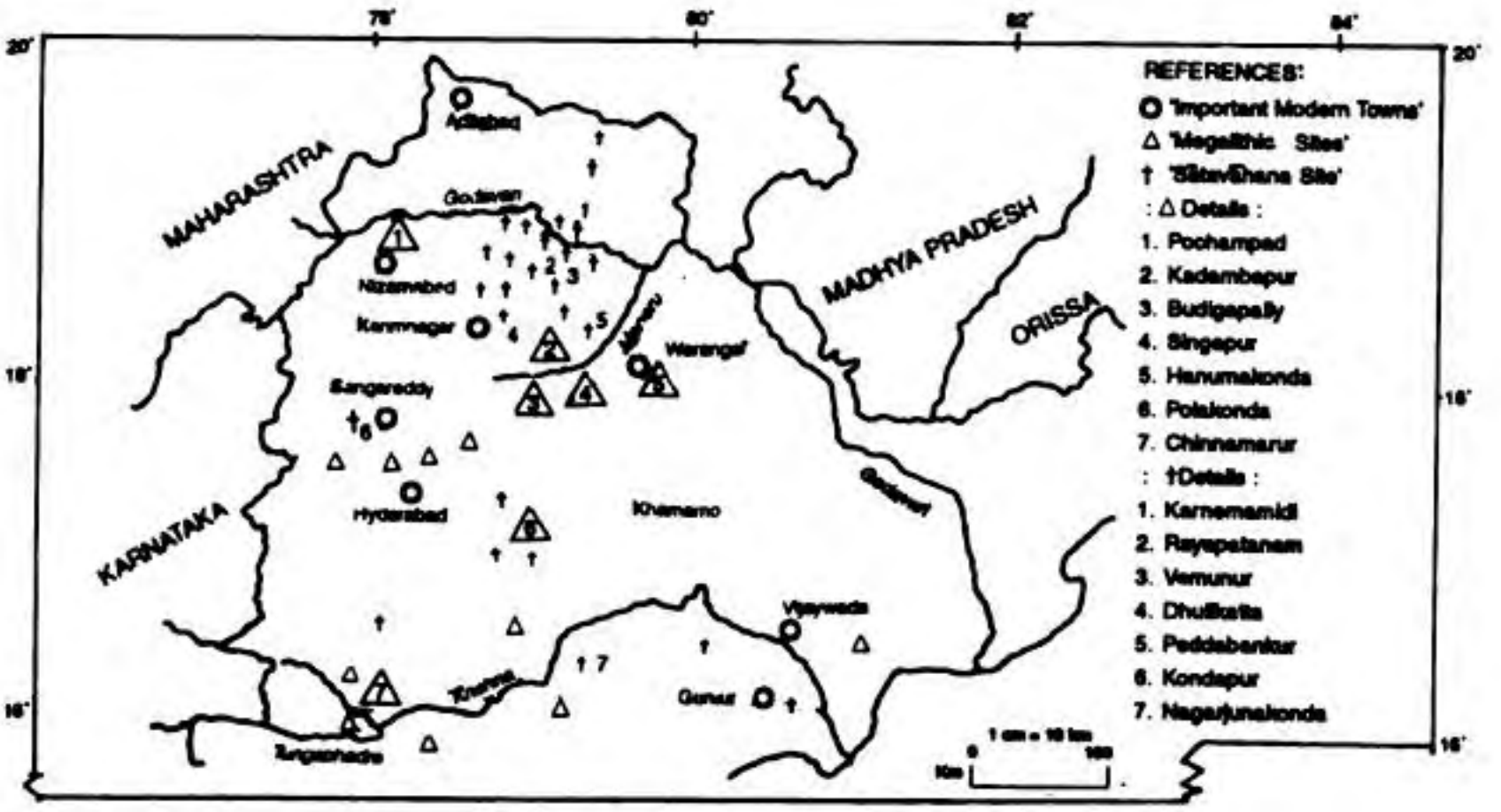
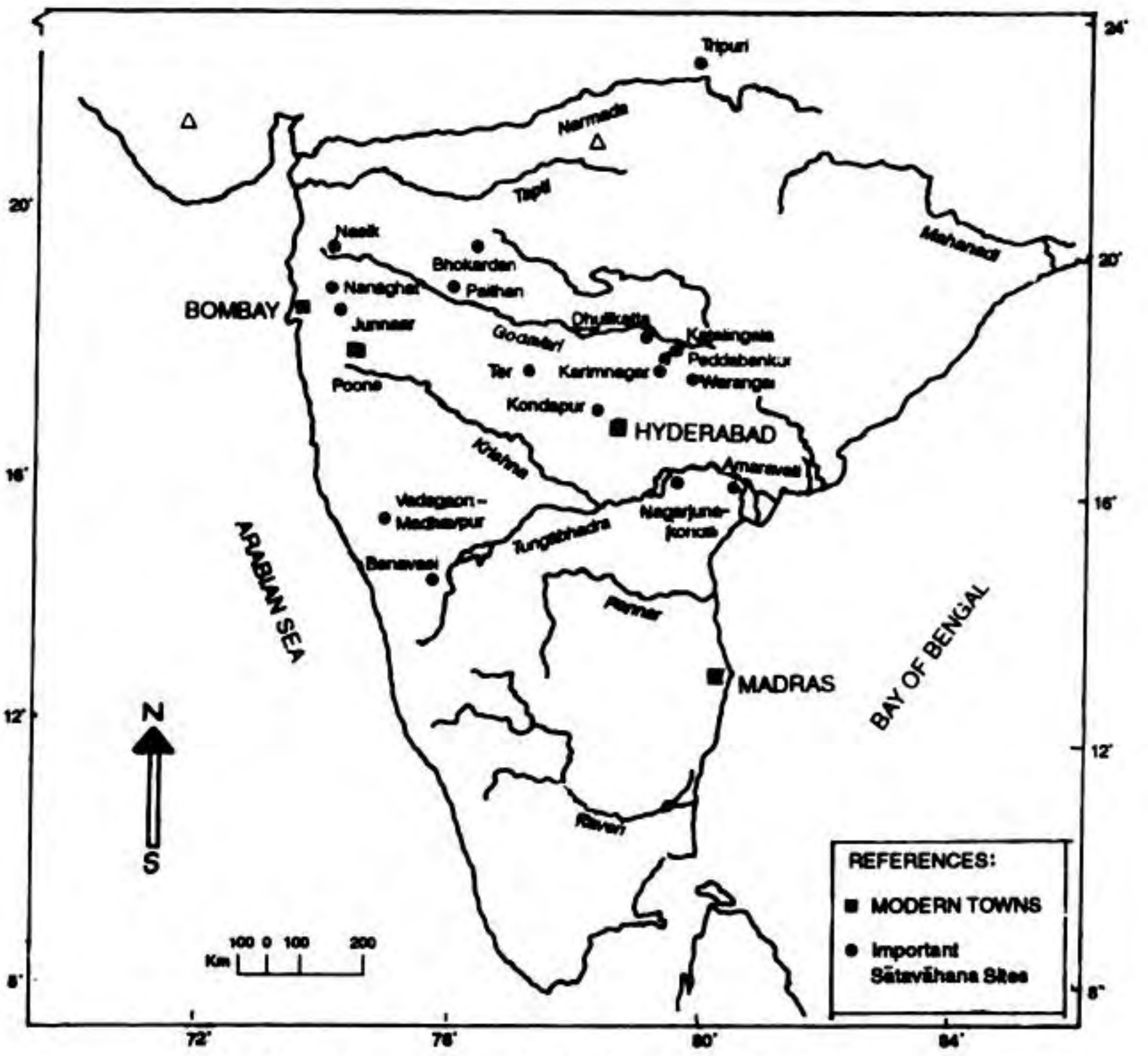
Map is adapted from the two maps that appear in the following books: I.K. Sarma, *The Coinage of the Sātavāhana Empire*, New Delhi, 1980 and V.V. Krishnasastry, *The Proto and Early Historical Cultures of Andhra Pradesh*, Hyderabad, 1983.



Map A: Distribution of Sites in the Mid-Godavari Valley.



Map B: Some Important Sātavāhana Sites in the Deccan.

6

Prevalence of Śaiva Siddhānta at Khajuraho

DEVANGANA DESAI

Of the twenty-five temples extant at Khajuraho in central India, at least seven are Śaivite[1]; in addition the vast remains of images, *linigas* and inscriptions suggest that many more Śiva temples were once under worship in this temple-town of Candella dynasty which flourished between AD 900 and 1150. Two long inscriptions of Śiva temples of AD 1001 and 1002 give us some idea of the nature of Śaivism at Khajuraho. The present article combines epigraphical material with iconographic data in order to trace the sect or sects of Śaivism that were associated with Khajuraho temples.

It is mysterious that in the period between tenth and twelfth centuries AD when the neighbouring Gwalior, Malwa and Ḍāhala regions of central India had inscriptions providing *guru-paramparā* of ascetics of the Śaiva Siddhānta school, Khajuraho's two major inscriptions of the Vaidyanātha (AD 1001) and Viśvanātha (AD 1002) temples are silent on the genealogies of *gurus*.[2] From the neighbouring regions we get evidence of three branches of the Śaiva Siddhānta.[3] Thus the Mattamayūra spread to Gwalior, Ranod, Kadwaha, Malwa, Panjab, and Karkoroni in the Deccan; the Mādhumateya spread to Gurgi, Chandrehe and Bilhari influencing the royal family of the Kalacuris of Ḍāhala; and the Āmarddaka branch in Rajasthan spread to Karahat and Karnataka. The *ācāryas* of the Sopārīya line of the Āmarddaka maṭha influenced the Pratihāras of Kanauj and their genealogy is recorded in an inscription of AD 959.[4]

The preponderance of erotic sculpture on Khajuraho temples has led some scholars to associate the temples with the left-hand Kaula-Kāpālika cults.[5] However, L.K. Tripathi[6] has exposed this hypothesis and convincingly shown that the shaven-headed monks depicted in erotic scenes hold *picchikā* (peacock tail feathered stick) and are not Kāpālikas but Kṣapaṇaka Digambaras. These monks were not revered but ridiculed by temple builders of Khajuraho and were not associated with the management of temples. The earliest temple to have erotic depiction at Khajuraho was the Lakṣmaṇa temple dedicated to the Vaikuṇṭha form of Viṣṇu and it was affiliated to the Pañcarātra cult of Vaiṣṇavism. Though influenced by Tantrism it had no connection with the Kaula-Kāpālikas. Its inscription supports *Trayīdharma* of the Vedas and the protection of the brāhmaṇas and cows. Its sculptural depiction indicates the intention of the temple-builder to denigrate non-Vedic heretical sects and to consolidate the orthodox Brāhmaṇical religion based on Vedic order.[7]

The allegorical play *Prabodhacandrodaya* by the Candella court poet Kṛṣṇa Miśra also places the Kāpālikas, Kṣapaṇakas, Buddhists (Vajrayāna) and the materialist Cārvāka in the camp of the opponent King Mahāmoha (Great Delusion). These non-Vedic, heretical sects disappear from the scene when King Viveka (discrimination) wins the battle, aided by Viṣṇu-Bhakti (devotion), Sarasvatī, Śānti (peace), etc. The Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas and Sauras led by Sarasvatī, come together to fight the heretical forces (Act V, p. 125). It is worth noting that the court poet criticizes the Kāpālikas, but not the Śaivas with Vedic leanings.[8] Like the court poet, the temple artists also ridicule practices of the extreme sects. In several sculptural depictions on temples, the Kṣapaṇaka monks (in relation with women) are shown as being hit by persons rushing towards them.[9]

Khajuraho temple inscriptions also support the brāhmaṇas, Vedas and caste-order in contrast to the extreme Tantric sects who were anti-brāhmaṇa, anti-Veda and anti-*varṇāśramadharma*.

Let us turn to the material we get from the inscriptions of the two Śiva temples of Khajuraho. The first inscription, dated VS 1058 (AD 1001), belonged to the Śiva-Vaidyanātha temple. The temple has not survived but from the find of its inscription near King Dhaṅga's Viśvanātha temple, it seems that it was built near this temple in the royal complex of temples, close to the Kṣīrasāgara lake in the western area of Khajuraho. The inscription states that the temple was built by Gahapati Kokkala, who had founded a town (*puram*) and who appears to be a top-ranking military official. He settled near the temple a *vṛnda* (group) of brāhmaṇas well-versed in the Vedas and engrossed in *ṣaṭkarma* (six acts) (verse 21). Some part of the inscription is effaced but "it appears to describe certain buildings close to the temples, which Kokkala erected for pious brāhmaṇas".[10]

Similarly, the Viśvanātha temple inscription mentions arrangements made by King Dhaṅga near the temple for the settlement of the brāhmaṇas, engrossed in *ṣaṭkarma* (verse 52). He honoured them with wealth, grain, cows and land (verse 53). Dhaṅga performed *tulāpuruṣa* ceremony and distributed gold in large quantities to the brāhmaṇas. The inscription mentions the illustrious royal family-priest (*purodhas*) named Bhāṭṭa Yaśodhara of Bhāradvāja *gotra* and a follower of the Vājasaneyī Śākhā who directed administration of justice. He was also a donee of a copper- plate grant of King Dhaṅga given at Kāśī in AD 998 on the occasion of a lunar eclipse.[11]

Thus from these inscriptions of the Śiva temples at Khajuraho we learn that a brāhmaṇa *purohita* played an active role in King Dhaṅga's time and after the ruler's death arranged to put the inscribed eulogy on the temple. Secondly, the *vṛndas* (groups) of brāhmaṇas, learned in the Vedas, were housed near the Viśvanātha and Vaidyanātha temples. But there is no mention of the lineage of *ācāryas* as we find in the neighbouring regions of central India. Yet in sculpture of the Viśvanātha temple there are several representations of *ācāryas*, flanked by male and female attendants. They are shown seated in a row. Although from sculptural depiction we cannot know the sect to which they belonged it is certain that the temple artist depicted a line of preceptors.

Significantly, there is evidence of the presence of Śaiva Siddhānta ascetics at Khajuraho as well as in the Candella territory. The two sects, viz., the Pāśupata and the Śaiva (i.e., Śaiva Siddhānta), are specifically mentioned in the Candella inscription of Kālañjara dated AD 1090.[12] It records the construction of a *maṇḍapa* for the Nīlakaṇṭha temple by Śrīmūrti, King Kīrtivarman's *guru*. The royal preceptor directed the chiefs of Śrīkaraṇas, Śaivas, Pāśupatas, temple superintendents (*vārikas*) and others that they should comply with the request of (the donor) Vāsudeva and "allow him to enjoy the merit of his good deed as by this compliance they will also earn a part of the merit". This inscription is quite remarkable for it provides a definite evidence not only on the prevalence and patronage of the two Śaivite sects (the Śaivas and the Pāśupatas) at Kālañjara, a fort-town of the Candellas, only fifty miles away from Khajuraho, but also their association with the temple organization.

However, there is not much evidence on the Pāśupata link with Śiva temples at Khajuraho. The temples of the Pāśupata sect generally represent images of their teacher Lakulīśa, as for instance, at Bhubaneswar, Ellora, Mukhalingam, etc. But hardly any image of Lakulīśa can be found at Khajuraho except a tiny representation on the *parikara* of a Devī image, a detached sculpture, now in the Site Museum. Secondly, though the name "Gaṇḍa", the son of King Dhaṅga, reminds us of the designation of priests of the Gārgya branch of the Pāśupata school,[13] Gaṇḍa also means a hero or a warrior and it is in this sense that it is likely to have been used in the context of a prince's proper name.

But if evidence for Pāśupata Śaivism at Khajuraho is thin, that for Śaiva Siddhānta is considerable. First of all, evidence for Śaiva Siddhānta can be seen in the two unique images of Sadāśiva Catuṣpāda (four-legged) with six visible heads, topped by a *liṅga*. One of these images, now in the Site Museum, has the name "Sadāśiva" inscribed on the pedestal.[14] The other image is in an *āvaraṇa*-niche in the northeast corner of the Kandariyā Mahādeva temple. These images must have been "supports of meditation" for the *sādhakas*.

The Sadāśiva concept seen in other Śaivite schools is much more developed in the Śuddha-Śaiva or Śaiva- Siddhānta school. As T.A. Gopinatha Rao[15] says, "The idea implied in the positing of the two gods, the Sadāśivamūrti and the Mahāsadāśivamūrti contains within it the whole philosophy of the Śuddha-Śaiva school of Śaivism...". Sadāśiva is conceived of as *sakala-niṣkala* (manifest-non manifest) and forms a link between Paraśiva, the Highest Reality, who is *niṣkala* (non-manifest) and Maheśa who is *sakala* (manifest) aspect of Śiva. Now, the Sadāśiva concept is pivotal to the iconic imagery of the major Śiva temples of Khajuraho. As mentioned above, one important image of the four-legged Sadāśiva is in the *mahāmaṇḍapa* of the Kandariyā Mahādeva temple. Some of the syncretistic images like the one on the Dulādeva temple combining Sūrya with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva also can be considered as "a support of meditation on Sadāśiva".[16]

Secondly, in representing Sadāśiva as *Catuṣpāda*, with four *padas*, the artist conveys, by way of a pun on the word *pāda* (meaning a foot or a part), the *Catuṣpāda* (four parts) of the Śaiva Siddhānta system. *Catuṣpāda* (literally four

feet of the image of Sadāśiva) refers to the four *pādas* (parts) viz., (1) *jñāna*, knowledge; (2) *caryā*, conduct, daily rituals; (3) *kṛyā*, action which gives rules of initiation and methods of worship; and (4) *yoga*, of the Śaiva Siddhānta texts such as the *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*. The *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha* of the early fourteenth century defines this Śaiva system as *Tripadārtham* (of Pati, Paśu, Pāśa), *Catuṣpādam Mahātantram*. The *Vāyavīya Saṃhitā* (II, 10, 30) of the *Śiva Purāṇa* which gives us an exposition of this system, describes *dharma* (religion) as *Catuṣpāda*, consisting of *jñāna*, *caryā*, *kṛyā* and *yoga pādas*. The Śaiva Siddhānta is a right-hand Tantra as distinct from left-hand schools of the Kaulas and Kāpālikas.

Thirdly, an important evidence of the Śaiva Siddhānta at Khajuraho is the name of the Ācārya "Ūrdhva-Śiva" in the inscription on the pedestal of the Sadāśiva image in the Site Museum, as ascribable to the second half of the eleventh century AD.[17]

The suffix "-Siva", in the name of the Ācārya links him with similar *dikṣā* names of *ācāryas* ending with "-Siva", such as Praśāntaśiva, Prabodhaśiva, Nādaśiva, Kumāraśiva, etc. of the Śaiva Siddhānta school, whereas the contemporaneous Pāśupata and Kālāmukha ascetics, for instance, had their *dīkṣā* names with the prefix "bhāva-" or the suffix "- rāśi" or "-śakti".[18]

Thus, it seems very likely that from the middle of the eleventh century, if not from the time of the early Śiva temples, a branch of Śaiva Siddhānta ascetics were associated with the Śiva temples of Khajuraho. The magnificent Kandariyā Mahādeva temple representing the Catuṣpāda Sadāśiva image was most possibly associated with the Śaiva Siddhānta system. I have shown elsewhere[19] the close correspondence between the rituals described in the Śaiva Siddhānta texts and iconic imagery represented in the Kandariyā Mahādeva temple. The epigraphical evidence available so far does not however enable us to decide whether it was the Śaiva Siddhānta of the Madhumati branch as prevalent in the Cedi-Kalacuri region, or of the Mattamayūra branch as at Kadwaha, Ranod, etc. or of the Āmarddaka branch which influenced the Pratihāras of Kanauj. But the "Śaivas" mentioned in the Kālañjara inscription of AD 1090, and the name of Ācārya Ūrdhvaśiva on the pedestal of the Sadāśiva image as well as the typical iconographical features of the four-legged Sadāśiva images strongly indicate the prevalence of the Śaiva Siddhānta school at Khajuraho. It is this right-hand school with Vedic-Tantric worship and not the Vāmācārī sects of the Kaula-Kāpālikas that was associated with Khajuraho's Śiva temples.

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7

Trade at Maṇḍapikās in Early Medieval North India

RANABIR CHAKRAVARTI

One of the distinctive aspects of researches in early Indian socio-economic history over the last two decades and a half is the growing recognition of the fact that the society and economy of early India had in them the elements of and capacity to change. Different stages in early Indian economy have been discerned.[1] One of these stages, the early medieval (*c.* AD 600-1200), has received considerable attention of historians who highlight the distinct socio-economic ethos of that phase. Sharp breaks in the economic life of the early medieval from that of the early historical are shown within the framework of a new socio-economic formation, Indian Feudalism.[2] The broad developments in early medieval economy are suggested to be (i) growth of individual ownership of land at the cost of royal and communal ownership (ii) subjection of peasantry through sub-infeudation, eviction and imposition of non-customary taxes and forced labour (iii) conversion of income from trade and crafts into benefices, and finally (iv) the existence of a self-sufficient economy buttressed by lesser use of coins and comparative absence of trade.[3] It is, therefore, not surprising to find many historians concentrating on the agrarian economy of the early medieval period and only marginally on the non-agrarian sector of the economy. Recent years have witnessed a significant development in the economic historiography in that the general picture of a sharp economic decline in early medieval India has somewhat changed. Some historians are examining the non-agrarian sector of early medieval economy and important data and conclusions are now available on crafts, commerce and urbanism.[4]

It is in this context of growing interest in the commerce and urbanism of early medieval India that the present study of *maṇḍapikā* as an exchange centre is attempted here.[5] Several terms are known to have denoted various types of non-rural settlements of early historical times, for example, *pura*, *purī*, *nagara*, *pattana*, *puṭabhedana*, *sthānīya* and *nigama*.[6] Significantly the term *maṇḍapikā* does not figure in this list, but begins to appear in early medieval sources. The term in question literally stands for a pillared and covered hall or a pavilion.[7] It also denotes an exchange centre and survives in the modern word *maṇḍī* which means a wholesale market. Though *maṇḍapikā* emerges as an economic institution in the early medieval period, the earliest reference to it may go back to the third century AD. The Hirahadagalli inscription of Śivaskandavarman speaks of a *māṇḍavika*, that is an officer in charge of *maṇḍapikā*.[8]

In the early medieval period *maṇḍapikā* figures frequently in epigraphic records as an exchange centre and also as a centre of collection of levies, commercial tolls and duties. The importance of *maṇḍapikā* as a toll-collecting centre is clearly borne out by the expression *śulkamaṇḍapikā*, that is *maṇḍapikā* where *śulka* or tolls/customs were levied. *Maṇḍapikās* are mentioned in the context of imposition of cesses on various types of commodities (by rulers and/ or merchants/mercantile communities) in favour of religious institutions. Important information, though hardly adequate, can be gleaned from these records on various aspects of commerce.

The present study is based on thirteen epigraphic records and the textual evidence of the *Lekhapaddhati* and inscriptions scattered over different areas of north India like Kangra, Gwalior, Bharatpur, Jabalpur, Nadol, Golore, Kathiawad and Gujarat, with apparent concentration in Rajasthan and Gujarat. These inscriptions range in date from eighth to the twelfth enturies AD. The other source, the *Lekhapaddhati*, belonging to the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries, contains recommendation relating to the imposition of commercial cesses on *maṇḍapikā* and also to the attitude of administrators to merchants coming to *maṇḍapikās*.[9] Some *maṇḍapikās* appear to have been situated at major urban centres like Sīyaḍoṇi, Bilhari and Anhilwada where they are described as *pattanamaṇḍapikās*, that is *maṇḍapikās* of *paṭṭanas* or large urban centres. They are obviously distinguished from exchange centres simply termed as *maṇḍapikās*, the latter being a smaller trade centre than the *pattanamaṇḍapikās*. The difference between a large and an ordinary *maṇḍapikā* is also recognized in the *Lekhapaddhati* under the expression *mahāmaṇḍapikā*.[10]

II

Actual transactions at *maṇḍapikās* may now be examined in the light of epigraphic records. In the Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh a temple of Śiva Vaidyanātha was built by two brothers named Manyuka and Ahuka belonging to a merchant family. The Baijnath-*praśasti* (no.2; eighth/ninth centuries) informs us that the two brothers donated an oil-mill (*tailotpīḍanayantra*) to the same deity, obviously for providing lamps in the temple. The deity was further favoured by a gift of six *drammas* per day out of the collection at the *maṇḍapikā* of Kīragrāma (ancient name of Kangra).[11] The commercial character of Kīragrāma is evident from the presence of a family of merchants and imposition of levy at the *maṇḍapikā*. The daily collection of cess at the *maṇḍapikā* indicates that Kīragrāma had a regular market and not a periodic fair. This exchange centre, however, seems to have been located in a rural area, as it is given the epithet *grāma*. The presence of an oil-mill may suggest cultivation of oil-seeds in the rural area adjacent to the *maṇḍapikā*.

From the *maṇḍapikā* in a rural surrounding in the Kangra valley, one may turn the focus to a full-fledged urban commercial centre, viz., Siyaḍoṇi near Gwalior. The site is explicitly designated as a *pattanamaṇḍapikā* in the Siyaḍoṇi stone inscription.[12] Sīyaḍoṇi had several streets (*rathyās*), market centres

(*haṭṭas*), professional quarters (*vīthīs*) and settlements of various groups (e.g., distillers or *kallapālas*, braziers or *kāṃsakāras*, oilmen or *tailikas*). Siyaḍoṇi's significance as an exchange and manufacturing centre can hardly be doubted. Another factor that led to the prominence of Siyaḍoṇi as an urban centre was its important position as an administrative centre under the imperial Pratihāras. Four rulers are mentioned in the span of sixty years (AD 907-68) in the context of gift of cesses at the *maṇḍapikā*.[13]

The *maṇḍapikā* at Siyaḍoṇi is mentioned at least on five occasions in the context of donation of cesses to different deities. The most prominent figure at this commercial centre was the salt merchant (*nemakavaṇija*) Nāgāka whose father Caṇḍuka was also a dealer in salt. In AD 907, Mahāsāmantādhipati Undabhaṭa endowed in favour of Viṣṇubhaṭṭāraka, established by Caṇḍuka, a daily sum of five *drammas* out of the collection at the *maṇḍapikā*.[14] Five years later (AD 912) the salt merchant Nāgāka paid 1350 *drammas* to the markets (*haṭṭas*) of all distillers (*samastakallapālānām*) and the distillers agreed to pay every month 1/2 *vigrahaturigīyadramma* to god Viṣṇu on each cask of liquor.[15] This arrangement was made at the *maṇḍapikā* with the approval of the board of five (*pañcakula*). It appears that the merchant probably paid some dues on behalf of distillers at the liquor market and the latter, in return, consented to impose voluntary cesses on the sale of their product. Another merchant Vikrama built the temple of Bhāilasvāmīdeva to which all merchants (*samastamahājana*) unanimously decided to pay 1/3 of a *dram* every month (AD 943—1005 VS).[16] Next several oilmillers made a voluntary donation of Cakrasvāmīdeva to pay every month a *pālikā* of oil from each oilmill (*ghāṇakaghāṇakaṃ prati tailapalikā pradatta*).[17] This act of patronage was made in AD 950. Towards the end of the record a statement is made of daily payment of 1/2 *kākiṇī*, but nothing more can be known since the lines are badly broken.[18]

The record leaves little room for doubt that the *maṇḍapikā* at Siyaḍoṇi combined brisk commercial and manufacturing activities. Several items of daily necessities like salt and oil were sold here. The presence of many merchants, including one named Vikrama, should also be taken into account. The unanimous decision of *mahājanas* to make voluntary donation of cesses may suggest some kind of professional organization among merchants. That the oilmillers and distillers at the *maṇḍapikā* were organized under a guild may be inferred from the names of representatives of respective groups.[19] Several *pañcakulas* (board of five members) also figure at the *pattanamaṇḍapikā*, viz., those of Lodhuaka, Sīhapa and Purandara, etc. These *pañcakulas* acknowledged the authority of the Pratihāra rulers and approved of different donations of cesses to deities. Members of the *pañcakulas*, therefore, appear to have been entrusted with management of revenue collection and administration at the *maṇḍapikā*. References to several *pañcakulas* in connexion with different mercantile and professional groups may indicate that members of those *pañcakulas* probably represented their respective economic groups. It is not certain whether each of these *pañcakulas* functioned at different *maṇḍapikās* within the spatial limits of one *paṭṭana* or several *pañcakulas* performed their activities at a single

maṇḍapikā of the exchange centre. Though the second possibility looks more likely the chance of the existence of several *maṇḍapikās* at one particular *pattana* cannot be entirely ruled out.

Two *maṇḍapikās* figure in the Bayana inscription from Bharatpur, dated 955 AD. They were located at Śrīpathā and Vusāvaṭa probably situated near Bharatpur.[20] The local queen donated to a Viṣṇu temple three *drammas* at the *maṇḍapikā* of Śrīpathā and one *dramma* per horse at the market of Vusāvaṭa. Both these exchange centres are smaller in size and less important than Siyaḍoṇi. But at least the one at Vusāvaṭa was a centre of horse trade; thus this centre had trade in a luxury and costly item.[21]

A *maṇḍapikā* of definitely larger size was situated in Bilhari, near Jabalpur. The Bilhari stone inscription (dated 975) speaks of transfer of various cesses in favour of Nohaleśvara.[22] The existence of the *pattanamaṇḍapikā* here points to its location in an expansive urban space. Remarkable varieties of commodities were brought for transaction and levied at the *maṇḍapikā* of the city. The record enlists salt, betel nuts, black pepper, dried ginger and various other merchandise including vegetables, egg-plants, grass and liquor. Apart from cesses levied on these items, taxes were also realized on oil-mills, shops (*vīthī*) and fishermen (*dhīrmara*). While one *ṣoḍaśikā* coin was charged on the sale of each *khaṇḍikā* (amount uncertain) of salt, the same amount was taken every month from every oil-mill. On various agricultural products the rate was fixed at one *paura* coin per load on *bhāraka* (of unspecified weight/size). Each shop had to pay one *kaparda* (cowrie shell), and the same cess was imposed on green vegetables (*śākavārttākaṃ*). From dealers in liquors (*rasavaṇija*) and grass and fishermen only a small amount was levied (*yatkiñcit*). At the *maṇḍapikā* horses and elephants were also sold. On the sale of each elephant a cess of four *paura* coins was fixed, while on that of each horse, two *paura* coins. The interesting point is that the levy on the sale of horses was less than that on elephants, though the former, being not easily available in India, had to be usually imported at a very high cost. Another cess of one *paura* was fixed for a couple of *yugas* each day.[23] The term *yuga* means a document. In the context of levy of commercial cess, this may mean "a voucher authorizing the owner to exhibit his articles in the market place for one day".[24]

The above account highlights the impressive range of commodities brought for transactions at Bilhari. On the one hand there are various types of essential commodities like crops, fish, grass, salt, liquor and oil. On the other hand luxury items like the elephant, horse and pepper are also exchanged. The reference to *vīthīs* or shops is a clear pointer to the fact that the present *maṇḍapikā* was not only a centre of wholesale trade, but also of a retail trade. Some of the commodities particularly crops could have arrived at the *maṇḍapikā* from a hinterland not far from the trade centre. But betelnuts (*pūga*) and pepper (*marīca*) must have been supplied to Jabalpur area from the peninsular part of the subcontinent. Distant trade contacts can be assumed about the availability of horses which are not usually bred in Madhya Pradesh and had probably to be imported from north and north-west. The elephant, however, could have been

brought from the forest areas of Madhya Pradesh. The custom of issuing license/certificates against the payment of some fees indicates the presence of administrative authorities there supervising over transactions.

The geographical focus now shifts to Rajasthan. An inscription from Shergadh (AD 1017) records the daily gift of 3/4 *tolā* of ghee out of the *maṇḍapikā* tax (*ādāyāt*). The endowment was made as a religious donation by three merchants, viz., Narasiṃha, Govṛṣa and Thirāditya. The commercial character of the *maṇḍapikā* is borne out by its association with three merchants.[25]

If we club together the evidence of three records from Nadole in Rajasthan (AD 1114,[26] AD 1155,[27] and AD 1161 [28]), the gradual emergence of Nāḍḍula *maṇḍapikā* as an important exchange centre may be appreciated. The first record speaks of collection of six *drammas* at the Naḍḍulīya *maṇḍapikā*. A daily collection of one *rūpaka* from the same *maṇḍapikā* figures in the second record, once again pointing to the existence of regular market (and not a periodic fair) at Nadole. The revenue-bearing potential of commerce in this area is amply illustrated by the expression *Śrīnāḍḍula talapāḍa śulkamaṇḍapikā*. The *maṇḍapikā* is not only officially recognized as a toll-taking centre, but was situated in *talapāḍa* area. The last expression, according to D.C. Sircar, stands for lands fully assessed for revenue.[29] Further, five *drammas* out of the total collection at the *śulkamaṇḍapikā* were stipulated for providing incense and oil at the local temple. B.D. Chattopadhyaya's excellent study clearly establishes that, orginally a village (Naḍḍulagrāma) at the centre of 12 villages, Nadole blossomed into a *pura* (urban centre), a *maṇḍapikā* (exchange centre) and ultimately a seat of power of the Cāhamāna ruling lineage. A strong agrarian base, the situation of Nadole at a nodal point and establishment of a political centre—all combined to effect a change in the nature and character of this settlement.[30]

Another *śulkamaṇḍapikā* was situated at Nanana in Rajasthan.[31] Four *drammas* were to be monthly paid therefrom in favour of a deity.

The last record gives an account of the *śulkamaṇḍapikā* at Salakhanapurī in Gujarat (twelfth century).[32] Among dutiable items meant for exchange are *mañjiṣṭhā*, *paṭṭasūtra*, *pravālaka*, *karpūra kastūrī*, *hiṅgu*, *kumkuma*, *aguru*, *mālapatra*, *jaiphala*, *jaivotra*, *kāpaḍa*, *marīca* and *kharjjura*. Great diversity in the range of commodities is unmistakable from a study of this record. It includes cash crops, finished textiles, yarn, spices, fragrants, fruits and gems. Cash crops and some agro-based products dominate this list. Some spices, particularly pepper, were brought to Gujarat from peninsular India. At this *maṇḍapikā* one finds juxtaposition of essential commodities and luxury items.

Items for transaction were brought to the exchange centre from areas of production, either from a nearby area or distant countries. The Mangrol Inscription of AD 1114 from Kathiawad informs us that at the *śulkamaṇḍapikā* of Mangalapura (Mangrol) commodities were brought on oxen (*balivarda*), asses (*rāsabha*) and camels (*uṣṭra*). The last animal was utilized in transportation of goods especially in the context of western India.

The revenue bearing aspect of commerce at *maṇḍapikā* could have hardly escaped the notice of rulers. The revenue management problem from the point of view of the ruler is discussed in the *Lekhapaddhati*. The emphasis here is, however, on long distance external trade and traders. Some *maṇḍapikās* in Gujarat must have participated in the brisk external trade. The proximity of the sea, the rise of several important ports and the settlement of Arab merchants in Gujarat should be taken into account.[33]

The *Lekhapaddhati* enlists several important revenue officers apparently connected with revenue collection (*dāna*) at *maṇḍapikā*. They are *māṇḍavī* (officer-in-charge of *maṇḍapikā*), *pathakīyas* (those collecting record cess), *uparihiṇḍīyas* (tax inspectors). These officers are to collect from foreign merchants (*vacchivittas*) taxes for importing and exporting (*āgamanigamadānam*) according to prevalent laws and customs. A small present or bonus (*vikarapadāni*), obviously in excess of usual taxes, may be taken from them, but according to conventional practices. The officers are cautioned not to tease or disturb foreign merchants by asking higher cesses (*kimapyadhikaṃdānam*) as the fiscal extortion may lead to slump of taxes on foreign trade. This obviously means that excessive taxes forced foreign merchants to avoid troubled markets, thereby adversely affecting collection of commercial revenue. The foreign merchants and the caravan trader (*vinjara*=banjārā) are to be received well and honourably (*mānapuraḥsara*).

This account may illustrate the government's concern for framing a commercial policy which would not be detrimental to foreign trade. This text also recognizes and, in fact, legalizes upto a certain extent, corrupt practices like bribery, excess presentation of commodities, to the mutual advantage of both merchants and administrators. In some of our records tolls and customs were raised and donated by existing political authorities. On the other hand, individual merchants or mercantile groups are also found to have made voluntary donation of cess (in cash and kind) to some religious persons and institutions. At Siyaḍoṇi, Nāgāka, the salt merchant, the entire *mahājana* community and several oil-millers voluntarily raised cesses on three separate occasions. Important urban elite groups, principally composed of merchants, are found to have been occasionally engaged in revenue collection at *maṇḍapikās*, parallel to government machinery. The *pañcakulas* consisting of representatives of merchants and artisans, approved of such imposition of cesses by non-governmental agencies. Participation in revenue administration through *pañcakulas* may have improved upon the status of some merchants. At Siyaḍoṇi, one Purandara built a temple and was a member of a *pañcakula* also. Purandara is likely to have enhanced his prestige by participating in administration and also by providing patronage to temple building. At Siyaḍoṇi, several *nemakavaṇija* or salt merchants were present who often followed their profession hereditarily. Once in the Siyaḍoṇi record, a salt merchant is described as belonging to the *nemakajāti*. Heredity of occupation, economic well-being, act of patronage to religious and art activities may have contributed to the exclusiveness and social

compactness of salt merchants to such an extent that they attained the status of a *jāti*.

The early medieval period, particularly from AD 600 to 1000 is suggested to have experienced a sharp economic decline in commercial and urban economy.[34] There was a definite and unmistakable spurt in the growth of urban centres and markets in the post AD1000 north India. The above survey of spatial distribution of *maṇḍapikās* may show significant emergence of exchange centres even prior to AD 1000. The data also strongly go against the theory of decline in trade.

The most significant point here is that a large number of essential commodities were transacted at the *maṇḍapikā*. The bulk of daily necessities consisted of various types of edible and cash crops. The importance of *maṇḍapikās* as centres of grain trade cannot be overlooked. Some of the crops appear to have covered long distances indicating their commercial demand over extensive areas. Early Indian trade is often thought to have consisted of high value, small quantity, luxury, portable items. This line of argument must be revised in view of the growth of grain trade and trade in essential commodities. The development of grain trade in early medieval times can be explained in terms of the availability of exchangeable amount of surplus product. It may not be out of place to point out that creation of settlements through land grants in early medieval times was instrumental in expansion of cultivation into backward areas. To this should be added the arrival of a new technological device for irrigation, *arghaṭṭa/ghaṭīyantra*. The rise of local level exchange centres over widespread territories facilitated transactions in grains. The local level exchange centres were also often political centres of regional ruling lineages.

Early medieval trade, acording to R.S. Sharma, languished because of, among other things, donation/transfer of commercial cesses,[35] the like of which we have encountered so frequently in our study of *maṇḍapikās*. Voluntary donations of levies on commodities by merchants/artisans and revenue transfers by political authorities/administrative officers, however, may be seen as acts of patronage, the material basis of which was rooted in the gains derived from trade. This brings us to an altogether different theoretical proposition. Roberto S. Lopez, in the context of medieval Europe, found religious buildings as good economic indicators. Fernand Braudel uses this theory with approval and sees in the interruption of building of churches in exchange centres of Bologna (1223), Siena (1265), Santa Maria del Fiore (1302), "a sure sign of economic crisis".[36] Viewed from this angle, regular patronage to construction and maintenance of temples out of the revenues collected at *maṇḍapikās* may be indicative of the commercial property of *maṇḍapikās* and not otherwise.

Though originating as early as the third century AD, the *maṇḍapikā* appears to have been a product of the early medieval socio-economic milieu. With the exception of Siyaḍoṇi, Bilhari and Anahilvada *pattanamaṇḍapikās*, which were located at fully developed urban commercial centres, *maṇḍapikās* at other sites were essentially local level exchange centres. These were often closely related to their adjacent rural hinterland. In the commercial structure and hierarchy of exchange centres the *maṇḍapikā* may be assigned a position intermediate

between small, dispersed rural markets of periodic nature (*haṭṭa/haṭṭikā*) and developed urban centres (*pattanas*) involved in inter-regional and intra-regional trade. It is almost irresistible to check the temptation of invoking another European example: the Halls/Halles of late medieval Europe. The Hall/Halle had wide ranging connotations from a "simple covered market to the mighty building and complicated organization of the Halles which were from a very early date the belly of Paris"[37]. The present picture is far from clear in the case of early medieval India and even the idea of a rough parallelism between *maṇḍapikās* and Halls will not appear readymade. But enquiries about early medieval *maṇḍapikās* may be directed on similar lines, notwithstanding the paucity of data. In discussions of trade, markets and urban centres our attention is often too much concentrated on large, celebrated cities, the 'sun-cities' of Braudel. "But it would be a mistake only to count the sun-cities.... Towns form hierarchies everywhere but the tip of the pyramid does not tell us everything, important though it may be".[38] It sounds ambitious, if not precocious, to think in terms of Braudel's megascopic view of history, his breathtaking range and depth. But the challenge is worth attempting.

APPENDIX

Spatial Distribution of *Maṇḍapikās* (Epigraphic Records)

S. No.	*Source and Date*	*Area*	*Donation/content of record*	*Donor*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1.	Hirahadagalli C.P. of Pallava Śivaskandavarman; middle of the 4th century AD	Bellary, dt. Karnataka	Presence of various revenue officers including *māṇḍavika*	Sivaskandavarman
2.	Baijnath-*praśasti* (no. 2) 8th/9th century	Kangra, Himachal Pradesh	To Vaidyanātha 6 *drammas* of money out of the daily collection at the *maṇḍapikā*; names of three hereditary merchants Siddha, Manyuka and Āhuka.	Rājanaka Lakṣmaṇacandra
3.	Siyaḍoṇi Stone Inscription 10th century (various dates)	Gwalior area Central India	At the *pattanamaṇḍapikā*	
	a. AD 907		Daily payment of a quarter of *pañciyakadramma* to god Viṣṇubhaṭṭāraka established by salt merchant Caṇḍūka	Mahāsāmantādhipati Undabhata, Vassal of Pratihāra Devapāla

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
	b. AD 912		At the *pattanamaṇḍa pikā*. Payment of 1350 *ādivarāhadramma* probably on behalf of distillers who in their turn agree to donate 1/2 *vigraha-turigīyadramma* on the sale of a cask of liquor per month in favour of Viṣṇubhaṭṭāraka	Salt merchent Nāgāka and several distillers
	c. AD 948		Entire *mahājana* (trading) community to the god Bhāilaswāmī, established by merchant Vikrama monthly gift of 1/3 of a *dramma* at the *pattanamaṇḍapikā*; unanimous decision by *samasta mahājanas*; *pañcakula* present	
	d. AD 951		To the god Viṣṇu-bhaṭṭāraka established by salt merchant Caṇḍuka, cess from per oil-mill	Oilmen Keśava, Durgāditya Kesutaka, Ujoneka Tundia etc.
4.	Bayana Inscription of Citralekhā, AD 955	Bharatpur, Rajasthan	To Viṣṇu, 3 *drammas* from the *maṇḍapikā* at Śrīpathā and at Vusāvaṭa 1 *dramma* per horse	Local queen
5.	Bilhari Stone Inscription of Yuvarājadeva II AD 975	Damoh Jabalpur area, MP	To a maṭha, donation of cess collected at *pattanamaṇḍapikā* on salt, oilmill, betel, fruits, pepper, dried ginger, shops, green vegetables, liquor grass, fisherman, elephants and horses	Yuvarājadeva II
6.	Shergarh Inscription AD 1017	Near Kota, Rajasthan	Daily gift of one *karṣā* (3/4 of *tolā*) of ghee out of *maṇḍapikā* income to Bhaṭṭāraka Nāgraka	Three merchants, Narasiṃha, Govṛṣa and Thirāditya
7.	Mangrol Inscription AD 1114	Kathiawad	Information about transportation of commodities to the *śulkamaṇḍapikā* at Mangalapura by oxen, asses and camels	
8.	Nadole Grant, AD 1400	Rajasthan	Payment of 6 *drammas* out of Naḍḍula-*maṇḍapikā*	Local political authority
9.	Nadole Grant of Pratapasiṃha, AD 1155	Rajasthan	Payment of 1 *rūpaka* per day from the *maṇḍapikā*	Feudatory ruler

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
10.	Nanana Grant of Alhanadeva AD 1159	Rajasthan	4 *drammas* per month from *sulkamaṇḍapikā*	Alhanadeva
11.	Nadole Grant of Alhanadeva, AD 1161	Rajasthan	Monthly payment of 5 *drammas* at the *Naḍḍulatalapadaśulka maṇḍapikā*	Alhanadeva
12.	Grant from Salakhanapuri, 12th century AD	Gujarat	Mention of *śulka maṇḍapikā* cess on various commodities. *Manjiṣṭhā, pattasūtra, pravālaka karpūra, kastūrī, hiṅgu, kumkuma agura, mālapatra, jaiphala, jaivatri, kāpaḍa, malike, marica, kharjuraka*	

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2. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, 2nd edn., Delhi, 1980.
3. Ibid., p. 109.
4. The most significant critique of the 'de-urbanization' theory is provided by B.D. Chattopadhyaya in his studies in early medieval commerce and urbanization. See his 'Trade and Urban Centres in Early Medieval North India', *IHR*, I, 1974, "Urban Centres in Early Medieval India: An Overview", in Romila Thapar and S. Bhattacharyya, eds., *Situating Indian History*, Delhi, 1986; and "Markets and Merchants in Early Medieval Rajasthan", *Social Science Probings*, no. 2, 1985. R.S. Sharma suggests growth of urban centres and commerce from AD 1000 onwards. Chattopadhyaya, on the other hand, cites important evidence of development of commerce and urban centres before AD 1000, and labels the rise of urban centres in early medieval phase as the 'third urbanization'. Another important article in this connection is that of B.P. Majumder, 'Industries and Internal Trade in Early-Medieval North India', *JBRS*, LXV-LXVI, 1979-80, pp. 230-56.
5. The present study is largely inspired by B.D. Chattopadhyay's essays. He was extremely kind to give me typescripts of two of his last mentioned articles.
6. A. Ghosh, *The City in Early Historical India*, Simla, 1973, p. 45.
7. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit- English Dictionary*, p. 775.
8. D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, Calcutta, 1965, p. 461.
9. *Lekhapaddhati*, ed., C.D. Dalal and G.K. Shrigondekar, Baroda, 1925, discusses *maṇḍapikā* in a section entitled Dānamaṇḍapikāpatravidhi.
10. *Lekhapaddhati*, p.14.
11. *EI*, I, no.16, pp. 112-18, *Maṇḍapikotpattiddhanādattā-ṣṣaṭ-pratyaham dramma.*
12. *EI*, I, no. 21, pp. 162-79.
13. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *IHR*, I, pp. 203-19, gives an exhaustive and detailed analysis of the growth of the urban centre at Siyaḍoṇi.
14. Siyaḍoṇi Inscription, *EI*, I, no. 21, p.173, ll. 5-6.
15. Ibid., ll. 18-19. 16. Ibid., ll. 28-29. 17. Ibid., ll. 30-31.

18. Ibid., ll. 45. 19. Ibid., ll. 19 & 31. 20. *EI*, XXII, no. 20, 120 ff.
21. As the cess on the sale of horses is not categorically imposed on a daily basis, Vusāvaṭa appears to have had a periodic fair of horses. Similar horse fairs (*ghoṭakayātrā*) were arranged in early medieval times at Pṛthudaka (Pehoa) (*EI*, I, no. 23, pp. 184- 90). Animal and cattle markets were known also as Kanbalihaṭṭa (Kaman Stone Inscription, *EI*, XXIV, no. 45, pp. 329-36).
22. *CII*, VI, pt 1, no. 45, pp. 215, 223.
23. Ibid., p. 215, l. 31 *dinamanu ca yugayuge ca paurastu*.
24. Ibid., p. 223, n. 6. 25. *EI*, XXIII, no. 20 B, pp. 437-41.
26. Dasaratha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, pp.181-82.
27. *IA*, XII, 1883, pp. 202 ff. 28. *EI*, IX, pp. 63 ff.
29. *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, p. 333.
30. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Merchants and Markets in Early Medieval Rajasthan", op. cit.
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32. *IA*, VI, 1877, pp. 202 ff.
33. For the settlement of Arab merchants in Gujarat in the thirteenth /fourteenth centuries and even earlier, see S.C. Mishra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat*, New Delhi, 1985.
34. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*. Professor Sharma has modified his views to some extent. While the early medieval period was previously considered by him as one of sharp economic decline, he has recently given due importance to the expansion of agriculture, proliferation of metal based, (particularly iron) industries and growth of trade. See his "How Feudal was Indian Feudalism", *Social Scientist*, no. 129, February 1984, pp. 16-41. One is surprised that Simon Digby, "Economic Conditions before 1200" in Irfan Habib and Tapan Raychauduri, ed., *Cambridge Economic History of India*, I, reprint, 1984, pp. 45-48, virtually repeats R.S. Sharma's arguments without taking into account recent developments.
35. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Calcutta, 1965.
36. Lopez's view is discussed by Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, London, 1985, p. 35.
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8

The Medieval South Indian Guilds: Their Role in Trade and Urbanization

R. CHAMPAKALAKSHMI

One of the more important but less understood areas of economic activity in medieval south India is that of the corporate trading communities often called 'guilds'. The term 'guild' immediately conjures up the image of an association of professionals with a well-defined structure, a carefully framed code of conduct or rules and membership governed by certain regulations and qualifications. It is hard to get indisputable evidence of such an organization from the the south Indian records, although the term *Baṇanju dharma* is the nearest to a code of rules that existed and was adhered to by the itinerant merchant bodies. Hence, it is rather a matter of convenience that the term guild has been used to denote these merchant bodies; for there is hardly any similarity between them and the European merchant guilds or the *Hang* of China in Sung and Yuan times or the *Karimi* of Egypt.[1] It would perhaps be more appropriate to use the term organization which is the nearest equivalent to term *Samaya(m)* used in the inscriptions.

A second important aspect of the problem is the nature of the organization and its membership. Names of several groups occur in the epigraphic records all over south India and it is not always easy to identify them and determine their relationship to one another. To illustrate the point, one notices conspicuous references to the *Ayyāvoḷe* or *Aiññuṟṟuvar*, *Valañjiyar*, *Nānādesî* and *Nagarattār* apart from various other groups like the *Maṇigrāmam*, and *Añjuvaṇṇam* in the records ranging from the eighth to the seventeenth centuries AD more specially from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries, both in south India and Sri Lanka. With the exception of *Nagarattār*, all these terms refer to itinerant merchant bodies. While the *Aiññuṟṟuvar* or the Five Hundred figure prominently in most of the records, some 46 different groups are noticed in association with them at various centres and in different contexts. Listing all these groups K. Indrapala expresses the difficulties in determining the nature of their relationship with the Five Hundred and dismisses as untenable the view that the Five Hundred was a federation of all these bodies or that the latter were sub-divisions of the Five Hundred.[2] Some of these groups were non-mercantile in character as they refer to occupational groups like the *Pañcālas*, *Kumbhalikas*, etc.[3] and to groups of fighters taken to be mercenaries accompanying the Five Hundred.[4]

From the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, there is yet another major organization called the *Cittirameḷi Periya Nāḍu*[5] or the *Padineṇbhūmi* or *Viṣaya*

of the Seventy Nine *Nāḍus* appearing jointly with the Five Hundred in a position of prime importance in the *praśastis* of the inscriptions recording joint donations of tolls and cesses on merchandise. The pride of place is here given to the *Cittirameḷi* and the Five Hundred is assigned a secondary position, with their respective emblems, namely, the *sengol* and *meḷi* (the staff and the plough) of the first and the *paśumpai* (money bag or pouch) of the second.[6] There can hardly be any doubt as to the commercial and urban context in which these joint donations occur. This is to be seen as a result of the revival of long distance trade in south India in the tenth century AD, which was itself a part of the increase in south Asian trade involving such distant regions as Egypt, West Asia, South-East Asia and China.

The whole corpus of information on south Indian trade at this time centres mainly round the Five Hundred and to a lesser extent on the *Maṇigrāmam* and *Añjuvaṇṇam* and other such organizations. It would therefore be appropriate to start from the Five Hundred and proceed to enquire into the nature of its organization and relationship with other bodies. Only then can the complexity of inscriptional data be converted into useful categories of evidence. For reasons, which would become apparent in the course of this paper, it could also be useful to distinguish between the Five Hundred on the one hand and the *Maṇigrāmam*, *Añjuvaṇṇam* and the *Nagaram* on the other. The Five Hundred was a large organization of itinerant merchants, of a supra-regional character,[7] and the *Maṇigrāmam* was a localized merchant body operating within specific regions as the designations like *Uṟaiyur Maṇigrāmam* and *Koḍumbālūr Maṇigrāmam*[8] would show, though it had inter-regional and long distance trade links and interacted with the Five Hundred which carried on trade in the regions. The *Añjuvaṇṇam* refers to an organization of foreign merchants who seem to have begun their commercial activities on the west coast, particularly Kerala, in the eighth-ninth centuries[9] and spread out to the other coastal areas of south India from the eleventh century AD interacting with both local merchants and the Five Hundred.[10] Initially the term *Añjuvaṇṇam* seems to have referred to Jewish traders who came to the west coast and acquired settlements. Later, however, it also came to denote Arab Muslim traders.[11]

The designations of these merchant bodies remain the same throughout the period of their activity. The *Nagaram* is a much more specific organization of merchants found in every market centre and collection and distribution centre where local and itinerant traders met and exchanged items of trade.[12] *Nagaram* being a mercantile organization evolving from local groups organizing and controlling local trade, *Nagarattār* became a generic term for all the traders and the trading community, particularly in Tamil Nadu, and hence is used even today by the Nāṭṭukkoṭṭai Cheṭṭiars.[13] The Five Hundred, as an organization of merchants, originated in the seventh century AD in Aihole in the Hungund taluk of the Bijapur district of Karnataka.[14] It has been suggested that the founding of the Ayyāvoḷe Five Hundred may be seen as the result of a decision of a group of *Mahājanas* or brāhmaṇas (*caturvedīs*), also called the 500 *Svāmīs* of the *Mahāgrahāra* of Aihole, to institutionalize control of the existing commerce of

that region.[15] Hence it would be erroneous to trace the origin of the itinerant merchant organization, as Kenneth R. Hall has done, to small groups of expeditionary merchants who serviced less wealthy or isolated communities of the hinterland and found it profitable to band together for mutual protection. It would be equally wrong to assume that the itinerant merchant organizations of the Coḷa age developed from such bands of expeditionary traders into powerful commercial associations.[16] Aihole, also known as Aryapura and Ahicchatra in the inscriptions, was thus both the progenitor and birth-place of the corporation. However, the organization did not remain a single unified body throughout its history; nor was Aihole its permanent headquarters. The number Five Hundred was a conventional one and remained so for the rest of the history of the itinerant traders, who derived their name from the parent organization, despite the fact that the organization became a much larger one drawing its members from various regions and communities.

Other terms like *Nānādesî*, *Ubhaya-nānādesî*, *Valañjîyar* or *Vîra Valañjîyar*, *Baṇajiga*, etc. were of a descriptive or adjectival nature, and were used to denote the itinerant merchants following the trading profession or the *Banaṇju dharma*. Hence, these terms are found sometimes used interchangeably in many of the records. Among the other groups, who are mentioned along with the Five Hundred, were mercenary fighters who protected their merchandise, probably in lieu of a share in the profit. The militant character of their mercantile organization derives mainly from these groups whose valour and ferocity are indicated by such epithets such as Ilancingam, Cittiravāḷi, Eṟivīra, Munaivīra, Kongavālar, etc.[17] Some of them became traders through long association with the organization. Craft groups are also sometimes mentioned with the Five Hundred,[18] probably due to the links established between the two for the marketing of the commodities, particularly textile, metalware and pottery. Being the largest itinerant merchant organization covering distant regions and divergent commercial areas, the Five Hundred was the only organization to have mercenaries to protect its goods and to set up protected mercantile towns (with warehouses) called *Eṟivīrap- paṭṭaṇas*.[19] The name *Ayyāvoḷe*[20] became, in Tamil, *Aiyapoḷil* and *Danmapoḷil*, and was often used as a descriptive epithet of its towns and the deities, for example Aiyapoḷil Parameśvaī. But the term Five Hundred is more commonly used to denote the group and is sometimes stretched into "*Nānādesîya Tiśai Ayirattu Aiññuṟṟuvar*".

It has been pointed out earlier that the Five Hundred cannot be treated as a single unified body of merchants throughout its history, and that its functioning may not have had a uniform pattern throughout the area of its operation. Although there seems to have been some unity and common purpose in the early years of its activities, it has also been pointed out that with the growth of regional kingdoms and regional interests, there appeared a bifurcation between the guild as it operated in the Kannada speaking areas and as it functioned in the Tamil region.[21]

In Tamil Nadu it acquired the character of a composite body of itinerant traders who came from different parts of the Tamil speaking areas. One of the

most remarkable inscriptions from the point of view of its composition comes from Tirumalai in the Sivaganga taluk of Ramanathapuram district. After the usual *praśasti*, it provides a list of the people who belonged to the organization and who met at Tirumalai in the Aiññuṟṟuvar Tirukkāvaṇam of the local Śiva temple. The members hailed from different places and are named after their respective regions like the Tiśai Āyirattu Aiññuṟṟuvar of Vaḍakaḷavali Nāḍu, of Tirukoṭṭiyūr Maṇiyambalam, of Vembaṟṟūr, of Malaimaṇḍalam, of Alagaimānagaram and many other places.[22] Terms like Aiññuṟṟuva Bhaṭṭan and names like Aiññuṟṟuvan Inban Devan Cetti would also indicate the heterogeneous caste composition of this body. The Five Hundred was thus a group of people of "disparate origins associating together for a common purpose", that is, trade. In other words, this group consisted of members belonging to several castes, religions and regions.[23]

The earliest reference to the Five Hundred in Tamil Nadu comes from the Pudukkottai region towards the close of the ninth century, and its presence here and in the Ramanathapuram district is almost continuously attested down to the fourteenth century AD. This region is a crucial link area on the route between the Kaveri and Vaigai valleys and the important trading emporium of Toṇḍi on the eastern coast.[24] There is indeed a concentration of the Five Hundred inscriptions in the Pudukkottai and Ramanathapuram districts throughout the period under consideration. In this region the Five Hundred appears to have interacted with the Koḍumbālūr *Maṇigrāmam* and the local *Nagarattār*, some of whom may well have become local representatives of the itinerant merchant organization.

The route that the Five Hundred used to reach Tamil Nadu so early (ninth century—Muniśandai) after its foundation in Aihole in Karnataka is not clearly attested. It has, however, been suggested[25] that they moved into Tamil Nadu through the Chittoor region and Palar valley southwards, a route that was probably used by the Kuṟumbar tribes, who are still to be seen in the Pudukkottai area. This was the route followed by the invading Rāṣṭrakūṭa armies under Kṛṣṇa III in the tenth century AD. Equal claims to have been the regular route of migration or movement between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu may be made for the Kongu region, that is, from the Ganga country north of the Kaveri through Kongu into the Kaveri valley and further south. The existence of this route from very early times is attested by the provenance of Tamil Brāhmī inscriptions (Pugaḷiyūr, Aracalūr, Tiricirāpaḷḷi and Śittaṇṇavāsal), the discovery of hoards of Roman coins and by the traditions of the Digambara Jaina migration.[26] However, in both the Palar Valley and the Kongu region, the inscriptions of the *Aiññuṟṟuvar* appear only from the eleventh century AD. A second wave of Jaina influence in the eighth-ninth centuries, under Rāṣṭrakūṭa patronage, is also indicated by a series of Jaina epigraphs, marking a line of sites in the North Arcot, South Arcot, Tiruchirapalli, Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram, Madurai and Tirunelveli districts leading on to south Kerala.[27] These migrations may well have followed ancient and early medieval trade routes linking the different cultural regions of south India.

The spatial and chronological distribution of the Aiññuṟṟuvar inscriptions also makes an interesting study. In the Pudukkottai region, their activities in the ninth-eleventh centuries AD,[28] were encouraged by the early and middle Coḷas and their feudatories, and the Irukkuveḷs of Koḍumbālūr. The close matrimonial ties between the Coḷas and Irukkuveḷs may well have been inspired by the strategic location of the region linking areas of commercial importance. A rather close identity of interests between this commercial organization and the Coḷas may be recognized not only in the fostering of trade in this region but also in other regions conquered by the Coḷas in the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD.

The Five Hundred moved in wherever the Coḷas stepped in as conquerors. Into the region south and north of the upper Kaveri valley, that is, the Kongu and Ganga countries, the *Aiññuṟṟuvar* moved in the wake of the Coḷa conquests under Rājarāja I and Rājendra I (AD 985-1044). Talakkad, north of the Kaveri and, Muḍikoṇḍan (Muḍikoṇḍacoḷapuram) south of the Kaveri, marked the two major centres of merchant activity.[29] In Muḍikoṇḍan, the merchants of the 18 *paṭṭaṇas* north of the Kaveri and of the 18 *paṭṭaṇas* south of the Kaveri made huge endowments to the local Viṣṇu temple and exercised control over the temple management.[30] In the eleventh century, Aiyapoḷiḷ Kāttūr and Basinikoṇḍa (Śirāvalli) in the Chingleput and Chittoor districts respectively became Erivīrappaṭṭanas or protected mercantile towns under special charters from the Coḷa rulers for the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam region, also called Jayankoṇḍacoḷamaṇḍalam.[31] In northern Sri Lanka (Rājaraṭṭha), following the Coḷa conquests of the eleventh century AD, the Five Hundred became active in the organized commerce and movement of commodities with Polonnaruwa as an important centre.[32] After the political unification of Veṅgi with the Coḷa kingdom under Kulottuṅga I (AD 1070) the Five Hundred is seen as far north as Viśākhappaṭṭiṇam (Kulottuṅgacoḷan Paṭṭinam) and other coastal towns upto Drākṣārāma in the Ganjam district of Orissa.[33] Under the Coḷa royal patronage Tamil traders moved more frequently into the Andhra region and *Coḷamaṇḍalamuna Vyāpāri* are referred to in a few interior trade centres while Ghaṇṭaśālā or Coḷapāṇḍiyan Paṭṭinam on the coast became an important emporium under the middle Coḷas, Rājarāja I to Kulottuṅga I, whose interest in developing the Coḷa port of Nāgappaṭṭiṇam is well known.[34] Their trade missions to China, maritime expeditions to Śrīvijaya (AD 1025) and abolition of tolls by Kulottuṅga I[35] undoubtedly encouraged the movement of itinerant traders and helped in establishing trade links with China. The Canton inscription of Kulottunga I is indicative of his trading interests at that port.[36]

In the heart of the Coḷa kingdom, that is, the Kaveri delta, the Five Hundred began its activity in the tenth century in Tiruppuṟambiyam, Tiruviḍaimarudūr and various other centres such as Tiruveḷvikkuḍi, Tirunaḷḷāru, Tiruccengodu, Koyil Tevarāyanpeṭṭai and Tiruchoṟṟuttuṟai. It is seen as far south as Ukkirankoṭṭai (Karavandapuram), a fortified town in the Tirunelveli district, in the same period. In the middle Coḷa period the Five Hundred spread out into Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, Kongu Nāḍu and Pāṇḍi Nāḍu, the most notable example in the Pāṇḍya region being the *Eṟivīrappaṭṭaṇa* at Tiruvālīśvaram in the Am-

basamudram taluk (the newly developed Muḷḷi Nāḍu) of the Tirunelveli district with direct access to south Kerala through the Aramboli pass and control over the southern Pāṇḍya region of the Tāmraparṇi.[37]

The *Eṟīvīrappaṭṭaṇas* of this period are seen coming up mainly on the trade routes and even in the region of settled agriculture like the wet zone of the Tāmraparṇi.[38] The participation of local traders and *Nagaram* members in itinerant trade reached an unprecedented degree and hence a series of settlements named after the *Aiññuṟṟuvar* or *Valāñjīyar* were established as semi-permanent or permanent residential quarters in various centres.[39] It must, however, be pointed out that in the capitals of Tanjavur and Gangaikoṇḍacoḷapuram and the imperial port city of Nāgappaṭṭiṇam and even in Kancipuram and Mamallapuram, the *mānagarams* or local *nagarams* wielded greater influence and the Five Hundred and other merchant groups were more or less confined to the routes linking all other outlying regions (peripheral areas) with the Coḷa heartland and to the commercially important areas like Pudukkottai and Ramanathapuram districts and Kongu Nāḍu, that is, Salem, Enode (Periyar) and Coimbatore districts.

In the period of the later Coḷas, that is, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and of the Pāṇḍyas of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, we notice a phenomenal increase in the activities of the Five Hundred, with a clear tendency to expand its sphere of influence and to show less reliance on royal support and patronage, although many of the guild inscriptions are still dated in the reign periods of the late Coḷa and Pāṇḍya rulers. We have rather impressive evidence that in most centres of distribution and emporia the Five Hundred acted jointly with other organized groups like the *Cittirameḷi* or *Padineṇviṣaya* organization in the levy of *maganmai* and *paṭṭaṇappagudi* (tolls and shares or cesses of towns). In the elaborate *praśastis* of these inscriptions mentioning the two organizations, the *Cittirameḷi* is given precedence over the Five Hundred. Notable among these are the records from Tirumalai and Pirānmalai in Ramanathapuram district and Anbil, Koṟṟamangalam, Tuvarankuṟichi and Kovilpaṭṭi in Tiruchirappalli district.[40] Here they exercised their joint authority to levy and grant cesses and tolls to the local temples on merchandise passing through the region. The institutionalization of the coming together of several organizations and their exercising joint authority is a conspicuous feature of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries AD. However, it would appear that merchant bodies, particularly the Five Hundred, had on no occasion the authority to levy and grant such tolls, except in conjunction with the *Cittirameḷi* or the *Pāṇineṇviṣaya*[41] which refer to the organizations of agriculturists and local elite groups controlling production of agricultural and other goods. Presumably, in the assignment of brokerage and monopoly to individuals or groups of traders on certain items of trade, the Five Hundred exercised its authority jointly with the local *Nḍu*, *Nagaram* members and the larger agricultural organization of the 18 *viṣaya* or *Cittirameḷi*.[42]

The *Cittirameḷi Periya Nāḍu* was an organization of agriculturists, whose inscriptions appear in important trade and urban centres. It has been described

as an agricultural guild, by K.G. Krishnan, who has analysed the evidence of inscriptions not only from Tamil Nadu but also from Karnataka and Andhra,[43] where the *Cittirameḷi* appears from about the twelfth century AD. Although the Okkalu of Karnataka is taken to be a similar organization,[44] there is no clear evidence of the Okkalu being a supra-local organization like the *Cittirameḷi*. Like the Five Hundred, the *Cittirameḷi* also moved into south Karnataka and Andhra regions by the twelfth century AD following the Coḷa conquests. It is referred to as *Meḷi Sāsiravāru* in Karnataka and *Meḍikūru* in Andhra.[45]

Dominant agricultural organizations jointly mentioned in the 'guild' inscriptions probably had commercial transactions with the Five Hundred exchanging agricultural products for exotic and non-agricultural items. The growth in the power of landowning classes is a marked development of the twelfth century AD both in south India and Sri Lanka. The links that developed between the merchant guilds and associations of agriculturists were mainly due to the increase in the importance of agricultural commodities in trade from the a twelfth century onwards. The urban development of this period and the growing food requirements of urban settlements enhanced the influence of the agricultural classes, for such needs could be satisfied only by powerful peasant groups, who could mobilize grain and other products for supply to itinerant traders through local markets.

In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, particularly under the Pāṇḍyas, the joint presence of the weavers with trading communities like the Five Hundred also suggests that there was a closer link between textile production and trade and that a certain legitimacy was derived from the presence of the craft groups. It would appear that weavers gradually took to trading in textiles or worked for the itinerant merchant body by organizing production for a wider market. At this point reference to Cīlai Ceṭṭis in the northern Tamil region (Kancipuram) and in Kongu (Dharmapuri) may be noticed in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries inscriptions.[46] The largest craft organization which came to be set up by the fourteenth century AD was that of the weavers, whose *Mahānāḍu* organization had its headquarters in Kancipuram, the most ancient textile centre of south India.[47] The *Kaikkoḷas* and *Sāliyas*, two weaver communities of south India, came to be classified among the Right and Left Hand caste divisions,[48] which arose in Tamil Nadu in the twelfth century AD as a paradigmatic division to determine the social and caste status of the artisans and craftsmen, among others. Other craft groups also came to be organized largely under this division. With the increase in organized commerce and itinerant trade and the demand for textiles and other products, the artisan communities also obtained special privileges either from local chiefs or temple authorities and sometimes also through the good offices of the merchant organizations.

In a slightly different context the dependence of the craftsmen on the merchant organizations is underlined as seen in the role of the merchants providing asylum to the craftsmen in Erode as early as the eleventh century AD.[49] The merchant body sometimes framed rules for the *Valangai* and *Iḍangai* or granted them privileges emphasizing the interdependence of these two

sections of the commercial world, especially in areas where the merchants assumed control and management of temples and acted as protectors and patrons of artisanal groups, as in the Kongu region. The artisan community is seen to be coming into its own after the twelfth century AD that is, in the late Coḷa and Pāṇḍya periods. In the predominantly agrarian set-up of Tamil Nadu, the artisans were more often attached to the locality, that is, to the temple, the land owning brāhmaṇas and *veḷāḷas* through interdependent land tenures. However, changes in the agrarian organization (especially in the pattern of land ownership) and the introduction of an economy based on inter-regional trade, the demand for their services both by local landed groups and by the itinerant merchant organizations, acquired for them certain concessions and privileges meant to improve their social position. In the late twelfth century the *anuloma rathakāras* in Punjai were conferred special privileges.[50] The artisan community became participants in the gift-making processes as seen in the thirteenth century inscriptions from Noḍiyūr (Tanjavur district) where the Kaṇmāḷas of several places met and agreed to assign a tithe collected from among themselves to the local temple and to get differences settled jointly with the temple trustees and local chief.[51]

Craft production was perhaps more intensive in the Kongu region, where inscriptions from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries refer to large-scale artisanal activity and the participation of artisans in important civic duties for which they were conferred special privileges. Privileges were collectively granted to the Kaṇmāḷar communities in Kāñcikkūval nāḍu (thirteenth century), Vengāḷa nāḍu (thirteenth century), and Kāngeya nāḍu and Pūnduṛai nāḍu (fourteenth century) under the Kongu Coḷas and Kongu Pāṇḍyas.[52] Agreements among artisan communities for various purposes also became common during this period.

Thus organized commerce by *Nagarams*, *Maṇigrāmam* and long distance trade through itinerant merchant bodies accelerated the process of urban development, craft organization, a tripartite social stratification in an urban context in multi-temple centres, single large temple centres, some of which became pilgrimage centres and administrative centres. Many of these newly emerging socio-economic groups were accommodated in the *tirumaḍai viḷāgam* of the temple centres.[53]

The dominant role of the Five Hundred in inter-regional trade and commerce in south India is established beyond doubt by the continuous occurrence of guild records in the three major regions, that is, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Furthermore, their participation in overseas trade is also attested by the presence of guild inscriptions in northern Sri Lanka, Siam (south Thailand), Sumatra and Burma.[54] Notable among these records are the Shikarpur inscription in the Shimoga district of Karnataka[55] and the Pirānmalai inscription in the Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu.[56] The Shikarpur inscription refers to these merchants as travelling by land routes, water routes, penetrating into the regions of six continents, with superior elephants, well-bred horses, large sapphires, moonstones, bdellium, sandal, camphor, musk, saffron, etc. and spices and drugs, selling wholesale or hawking about on their shoulders.

Through this trade the royal treasury was filled with gold and royal family encouraged this trade by being the greatest consumers of luxury items. The imported items mentioned in the famous Pirānmalai inscription are of a different kind, like aloeswood, sandalwood, silk, rosewater, camphor oil and perfume, apart from elephants and horses, which are common in most inscriptions of south India. Aloeswood, camphor, sandalwood and horses are mentioned in the Kovilpatti inscription of about AD 1305.[57] Most of these items came from South-East Asia except horses. Significantly, the Barus inscription referring to the Five Hundred and dated in AD 1088 comes from the heart of the camphor growing area of Sumatra.[58]

Silk from China, elephants from Burma and horses from Arabia came both into the ports of the western coast and perhaps also into Kāyalpaṭṭiṇam on the Pāṇḍya coast. Rosewater came from West Asia. South India was both on the transit trade and terminal trade from West Asia to China, through Sri Lanka and South-East Asia. Toṇḍi and Kulaśekharapaṭṭiṇam were the ports at which many of the items were unloaded and distributed. An interesting record from Toṇḍi dated in AD 1269 registers an agreement by the *Añjuvaṇṇam*, *Maṇigrāmam*, *Sāmanta- Paṇḍaśālis* (probably stockists of commodities at the port) and others residing there, to levy certain taxes on commodities sold and purchased at the port, in order to meet the rebuilding expenses of the *maṇḍapa* of the local Śiva temple.[59] Spices, pepper in particular, and incenses were some of the other important items meant both for local consumption and for long distance trade. The temples and *maṭhas* or monasteries of the Tamil region were, next to the royal family, the greatest consumers of most of the articles mentioned above.

Many other commodities mentioned in the Pirānmalai and other Tamil inscriptions as well as the Chintapalle inscription of about AD 1240 from Andhra[60] refer to agricultural products like paddy, sesame, pulses, betel-nuts and leaves, salt and raw materials like cotton. Metals like copper, zinc, lead and iron also figure among the items of trade. In fact, the only manufactured goods requiring technological skill and organized production was textile (local cloth) and it is for south Indian textiles that there was an evergrowing demand. Hence the weaver community gradually acquired a position of great social and economic importance. This is attested by the references to *Kaikkoḷas* and *Sāliya Nagarattār*, who not only controlled production and marketing of cloth but also participated in temple services, (e.g., donations, conduct of festivals, administration and management).[61] There is also a noticeable change in the pattern of landownership, both weavers and merchants becoming landowning communities and wielding considerable influence in their localities.

If the presence of the guild inscriptions with their *praśastis* and lists of items of trade may be taken as a direct indication of distribution centres, most of them may be located in the Pudukkottai and Ramanathapuram districts and along the trade routes where *Eṛivīrappaṭṭanas* were established. The guild inscriptions often refer to the 18 *paṭṭaṇas*, 32 *Veḷa* (or *Veḷar) purams*, 64 *Kaḍigai-t- tāvaḷams* from where the traders came.[62] Though it would be difficult to identify and locate all of them, it is quite likely that some of the major centres with guild

inscriptions and the ports constantly used by traders are included among them, such as Vañjimānagaram (Karūr), Koḍumbālūr, Kulaśekharapaṭṭiṇam, Alagaimānagaram, Nārttāmalai, Toṇḍi and Pirānmalai. There also emerged a series of coastal towns starting from Tiruppūlaivanam (Pulicat), the northernmost point in Tamil Nadu, down to Koṛkai and Kāyal on the mouth of the Tāmraparṇi, marking a coastal route with halting stations and distribution points used by the itinerant traders. Kovaḷam, Sadras, and Tranquebar were some of these towns which became prominent in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries AD.[63]

Organized commerce in this period followed exchange by barter and also the use of money, although monetization in medieval south India at least down to the fourteenth century AD, was mostly on a low key, particularly in Tamil Nadu. The Vijayanagar period saw many important changes including greater monetization and emergence of individual traders and master craftsmen, which indirectly affected itinerant trading communities and their *samayam* or organization.

The towns of Tamil Nadu including the ones with guild activities differed in their administrative organization from those of Karnataka. The latter had their *paṭṭaṇasvāmīs* who were heads of towns and who presided over or participated in the meetings of the merchant bodies and other local groups,[64] as in Shikarpur. No such 'lords' of towns are known to have presided over either the *Nagarams* or market centres or towns with guild inscriptions in Tamil Nadu. There are, however, references to *paṭṭaṇasvāmī*, who alongwith members of the *Pādineṇviṣaya*, levied cesses on merchandise as in Piranmalai.[65] The *Nagarams* of Tamil Nadu were administered by their members with the help of accountants (*nagarakkaṇakku*) and other employees, and the market was governed by a specific set of rules and regulations and maintained through cesses and levies like *aṅgāḍippaṭṭam*.[66] The merchant bodies were subject to the common rules framed by the *Nāḍu*, *Nagaram*, *Pādineṇbhūmi*, *Cittirameḷi* organizations acting jointly in the form of an institutionalized forum, exercising authority through levying cesses and tolls and controlling the distribution of goods.

Localized groups like *Maṇigrāmam* and *Nagaram* were powerful bodies which diversified their activities by marketing special items by forming sub-*nagarams* like the *Vāṇiyanagaram*, *Śaṅkarappāḍinagaram* and *Sāliyanagaram* and *Śāttumpparisaṭṭanagaram* dealing in oil and cloth respectively at various centres like Vālikaṇḍapuram, Śeṅgālipuram, Tirukkoyilūr and other places.[67] The *Pāraganagaram* or sea-faring merchants were active in the region of Salem (Puḷḷur) even as early as the early Coḷa period.[68] Kudirai Ceṭṭis from Malaimaṇḍalam or Kerala were horse dealers, who catered to the needs of the Coḷa kingdom from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries.[69]

The *Vāṇiya nagaram* organized itself into a supra-local body of several regions or *padineṇviṣaya*,[70] somewhat like the Telikis of Andhra. Individual traders sometimes used the title of *Cakravartī*, indicating the emergence of merchant princes, as seen in the thirteenth-fourteenth century inscriptions of Muṭṭam (in Perūr, Coimbatore) and Śivāyam or Ratnagiri (ancient Tiruvāṭpokki) in the Tiruchirappalli district. Among the signatories to the Pirānmalai guild

inscription, mention is made of a *Samaya Cakravartī*.[71] Political stability disappeared with the decline of the Coḷa power in the beginning of the thirteenth century AD. References to *Vīradaḷam* and *Sūradaḷam* in the guild inscriptions of this period[72] probably indicate the usurpation of authority by powerful merchants and local chiefs, who took advantage of the decline of the Coḷa power and the relatively weaker Pāṇḍya power of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in order to protect themselves and their newly gained wealth and status from other rivals for power and position. However, after the fourteenth century, it is not easy to follow the history of the mercantile organizations, as their continuous presence is not attested in inscriptions of south India, especially Tamil Nadu. The rise of individual merchant families and a change in the nature and organization of craft production may well have led to the gradual disintegration of powerful merchant organizations.

REFERENCES

1. M. Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", *Studies in History*, IV, no. 1, 1982, p.1. A curious and untenable derivation has been made of the term *Karimi* from *kāryam*, on the wrong assumption that *kāryam* (affairs or work) is a Tamil word, whereas, in fact, it is of Sanskrit origin and adopted in all the regional languages of India, including Tamil. See Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Cambridge, 1984, p. 115.
2. K. Indrapala, "Some Medieval Mercantile Communities of South India and Ceylon", *Journal of Tamil Studies*, II, no. 2, October 1970, p. 31.
3. Ibid., p. 32. 4. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
5. *Cittirameḷi* means 'the beautiful plough', which was the emblem of this organization.
6. *SII*, VIII, no. 442 (Pirānmalai).
7. Tirumalai Inscription no. 10 of 1924 (*ARE*, 1923-24).
8. *SII*, XIII, no. 28 (Tiruveḷḷaṟai); 283 of *ARE*, 1964-65 (Kovilpaṭṭi); *SII*, IV, no.147 (Salem).
9. M.G.S. Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, pp. 4 , 29. Here the *Añjuvaṇṇam* is taken to be an organization of Jewish traders.
10. Viśākhappaṭṭinam Inscription, *SII*, X, no. 651. See also K. Sundaram, *Economic and Social Conditions in Medieval Andhra*, Madras, 1968, p. 94; Tittandatānapuram (Toṇḍi) inscription, 598 of 1926, *ARE*, 1926-27.
11. In the Kanara districts a merchant body called the *Hanjamāna* or *Hanjumanna* was active from about the fourteenth century AD. Was it the same as *Añjuvaṇṇam*? Could *Añjuvaṇṇam* and *Hanjumanna* be derived from *Anjuman*?: Kaikini inscription (South Kanara), *Annual Report on Kannada Research in Bombay Province*, 1939-40, no. 38. See also K.V. Ramesh, *History of South Kanara*, Dharwar, 1970, p. 253, where the author suggests that *Hanjamāna* represented Arab-Persian merchants.
12. See Kenneth R. Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Coḷas*, New Delhi, 1980, ch. 5.
13. *Nagarattār* is the designation of the Tamil trading community now also known as the Nāṭṭukkoṭṭai Ceṭṭiars in the Ramanathapuram and Pudukkottai districts.
14. Aihole Inscriptions, *IA*, VIII, 1879, pp. 237 ff.; *IA*, VI, 1877, p.138 n., B.K. 289 of *ARE*, 1927-28.
15. M. Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", op. cit., p. 6.
16. Kenneth R. Hall, op. cit., p. 151.
17. In the guild inscriptions of Sri Lanka, the guild members are closely associated with the *Veḷaikkārar*, a mercenary body and the *Valañjīyar* are often referred to as the elders

(*mūtātaiyar*) of the *Veḷaikkārar*, who must have moved into Sri Lanka along with the mercantile community. See K. Indrapala, op. cit., p. 33.

18. K.R.Venkatarama Aiyar, "Medieval Trade, Craft and Merchant Guilds in South India", *Journal of Indian History*, XXV, pt. 1, 1947, pp. 268-80; K. Indrapala, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
19. R. Champakalakshmi, "Urbanization in Medieval Tamil Nadu", in *Situating Indian History*, ed., S. Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar, 1986, Table VI.
20. In Karnataka from the eleventh century onwards, the Ayyāvoḷe acquired new bases and established several towns (e.g., "Southern Ayyāvoḷe") both under the patronage of the Western Cālukyas of Kalyāṇi and the Hoysaḷas of Dvārasamudra. Interestingly in an inscription of AD 1267 from Dodballapur, the Ayyāvoḷe merchants claim descent from the Coḷas and Cālukyas (*Coḷa Kulānvitarum Cālukyānvayarum*, *EC*, IX, Dodballapur 31). The "Southern Ayyāvoḷe" towns are believed to be named after the Ayyāvoḷe in northern Karnataka (See K. Indrapala, op. cit., p. 26). However, most of these towns came up in south Karnataka only after regular interaction between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu was established following Coḷa inroads and the movement of the Tamil merchant organizations into the link areas and Karnataka could be possible. It would hence be tempting to argue that these towns represent an expansion of the Tamil Five Hundred into Karnataka.
21. M. Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", op. cit., p. 4.
22. No.10 of 1924 (Tirumalai inscription dated AD 1233). The other groups mentioned are Pāṇḍimaṇḍala Perunirāvi Tiśai Āyirattu Aiññiuṟṟuvar, Deśivallabha Tiśai Āyirattu Aiññiuṟṟuvar, Koḷikkuṟicci Kaḍittāvuḷa Tiśai Ayirattu Aiññiuṟṟuvar, etc.
23. That the members came from different castes, religions and regions is indicated not only by the Tamil inscriptions but also by the Kannada and Telugu inscriptions of Karnataka and Andhra. See M. Abraham, "The Ayyavole Guild of Medieval South India", unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1978, ch. 5.
24. The early Brāhmī inscriptions in Śittaṇṇavāsal and the hoard of Roman coins datable to the early centuries before and after the beginning of the Christian era indicate an early trade route through this region. See R. Champakalakshmi, "South India" in *Jaina Art and Architecture*, ed., A. Ghosh, 1974, I, ch. 9; Mortimer Wheeler, "Arikamedu: An Indo-Roman Trading Station on the East Coast of India," *Ancient India*, no. 2. July 1946, pp. 118-21.
25. M. Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", op. cit., pp. 7-9.
26. P.B. Desai, *Jainism in South India*, Sholapur, 1957, pp. 25-27.
27. R. Champakalakshmi, "Kuṟuṇḍi Tirukkāṭṭāmpaḷḷi, An Ancient Jaina Monastery of Tamil Nadu", *Studies in Indian Epigraphy*, II, 1975, p. 89.
28. Muniśandai Inscription, *Pudukkottai State Inscriptions*, no. 61; Cettippatti inscription, ibid., no.1083.
29. R. Champakalakshmi in *Situating Indian History*, pp. 48-49.
30. Muḍikoṇḍān Inscription, 2 of 1910, *ARE*, 1909-10.
31. Kāttūr inscription, 256 of 1912, *ARE*, 1912-13 and Basinikoṇḍa, 342 of 112, *ARE*, 1912-13.
32. K. Indrapala, op. cit., pp. 32-33; M. Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", op. cit., pp. 12-14.
33. K. Sundaram, op. cit., pp. 93-96. 34. Ibid., pp. 92 and 95.
35. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Coḷas*, Madras, 1975, reprint, p. 331.
36. M. Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", op. cit., p. 14.
37. R. Champakalakshmi in *Situating Indian History*, Table IV-22 and Table VI.
38. Ibid., pp. 52-53. 39. Ibid., Table VI, no. 25; 150 of *ARE*, 1935-36.
40. Tirumalai 10 of 1924; Pirānmalai, *SII*, VII, no. 442; Koṟṟamangalam 650 of 1962-63; Tuvarankurichi 296 of 1964-65; Kovilpatti 286 of 1964-65.
41. R. Champakalakshmi in *Situating Indian History*, Table VI.
42. *Pudukkotai State Inscriptions*, no.125; 103 of *ARE*, 1932-33.

43. K.G. Krishnan, "Chittiramelı-Periyanāḍu—An Agricultural Guild of Medieval Tamil Nadu", *Journal of the Madras University*, LIV, no. 1 (January 1982).
44. M. Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", op. cit., p. 21.
45. T. Venkateswara Rao, "Local Bodies in Pre-Vijayanagar Andhra", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Dharwar, 1975, pp. 76- 78.
46. 165 of *ARE*, 1968-69; *SII*, VII, no. 588.
47. Vijaya Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India*, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 38-39.
48. Ibid., pp. 55, 58-59, 107-8.
49. Erode Inscription, 215 of *ARE*, 1976-77.
50. Puñjai Inscription, 198 of 1925 (*ARE*, 1925- 26).
51. Noḍiyur Inscription, 201 of *ARE*, 1932-33.
52. 186 of 1911 (*ARE*, 1911-12); 25 of *ARE*, 1967-68.
53. *SII*, *VI*, no. 258 (Manimangalam); *SII*, XII, no. 154 (Chidambaram).
54. See K. Indrapala, "South Indian Mercantile Communities in Ceylon, 950-1250", *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, New Series, I, no. 2, July-December 1971; K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, "Takua Pa and its Tamil Inscription", *Journal of the Malaya Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, XXII, pt. 1, 1949, pp. 25- 30; *EI*, VII, no. 27, pp. 197ff.
55. Shikarpur Inscription, *EC*, VII, no. 118, p. 86. 56. *SII*, VIII, no. 442.
57. 286 of *ARE*, 1964-65.
58. M. Abraham, "A Medieval Mercantile Guild of South India", op. cit., pp. 4 & 6.
59. Tittandatānapuram (Toṇḍi) Inscription, 598 of 1926, *ARE*, 1926-27.
60. 277 of *ARE*, 1934-35.
61. 196 of *ARE*, 1912; *SII*, VI, nos. 252 & 257; see also Vijaya Ramaswamy, op. cit., pp. 41-46, and 54-55.
62. 154 of 1903; *SII*, VIII, no. 442.
63. R. Champakalakshmi, in *Situating Indian History*, Table VII.
64. K. Indrapala "Some Medieval Mercantile Communities of South India and Ceylon", op. cit., pp. 29-30; G.R. Kuppuswami, *Economic Conditions in Karnataka (AD 973-1336)*, Dharwar, 1975, pp. 101, 113; *EC*, VIII, no. 94.
65. *SII*, VIII, no. 442. 66. Kenneth R. Hall, op. cit., pp. 58-60.
67. *Vālikaṇḍapuram*, 309 of *ARE*, 1964-65 (Śaṅkarappāḍi); Tiruppangili, 163 of *ARE*, 1938-39 (*Vāṇiyanagaram*); Śeṅgālipuram, 23 and 30 of *ARE*, 1916-17 (*Śāttumpparisaṭṭanagaram*); Tirukkoyilūr, *SII*, VII, 901 (*Sālikanagaram*).
68. Pullur Inscriptions, 325 and 372 of 1939-40.
69. R. Champakalakshmi, "Growth of Urban Centres in South India: Kudamukku-Palaiyārai, the twin-city of the Colas", *Studies in History*, I, no. 1, 1979, p. 12.
70. Vālikaṇḍapuram Inscription, 264 of *ARE*, 1943-44; Vengalam Inscription, 141 of *ARE*, 1974-75.
71. Ikkarai-Boluvāmpaṭṭi Inscription, 415 and 418 of 1958-59; Sivayam Inscription, 48 of 1913, *ARE*, 1912- 13; Pirānmalai Inscription, *SII*, VIII, 442.
72. For *Sūradalam* see Vālkaṇḍapuram Inscription, 264 of *ARE*, 1943-44.

9

How Monetized was the Śilāhāra Economy?*

K.M. SHRIMALI

Ever since the publication of R.S.Sharma's seminal contribution on the politico-economic structure of north India in 1965,[1] there has been some rethinking about the role of metallic money in the post-Gupta centuries. This paper is concerned with the cash nexus functioning under the aegis of the Śilāhāras. While at least ten Śilāhāra families are known from epigraphic records of Maharashtra and Karnataka,[2] the present study is based on 64 inscriptions belonging to three branches stationed in north and south Konkan as well as in Kolhapur.[3] The dates of these inscriptions are in the Śaka era and range between 765 and 1182. While the records of the north and south Konkan branches are inscribed in Nāgarī characters, those of the Kolhapur branch constitute a mixture of Nāgarī, Old Kannada and Kannada. Linguistically, 32 out of a total of 45 records of the two branches of Konkan area are in Sanskrit and the rest are sprinkled mostly with Marathi—there are a few cases of the flourishes of Old Marathi[4] as well as Kannada.[5] The predominant language used in the inscriptions of the Śilāhāras of Kolhapur is Kannada, though some in Sanskrit and a mixture of Old Kannada are also not unknown.[6] A great majority of these inscriptions are engraved on stone[7] but as many as 26 are copperplate grants.[8] The geographical spread of the aforesaid three branches is coeval with the territory encompassed between the western coast and 75° E longitude and 15.5° to 20°N latitudes. The cardinal extremes are represented by the Chinchani plate[9] in the north, two fragmentary stone inscriptions from Jugal in the south[10] and the Shedabal stone inscription in the east.[11] Numerous inscriptions on the west coast, particularly those of the north Konkan branch,[12] obviously indicate the extremity in that direction.

In a recent contribution we have discussed the nature of responses to R.S. Sharma's hypothesis of the link between paucity of coinage and trade in the post-Gupta centuries. The limitations of these responses have also been pointed out in the context of larger issues concerning socio-economic formation.[13] More recently, two studies[14] have attempted to question the hypothesis in the light of some early medieval coin types, such as the Indo-Sassanian, Śrī Vigraha, Śrī Vi, Śrī Adivarāha, Bull and Horseman, Gadhaiya, etc. The geographical focus of these analyses has been north India in general and the Ganga valley in particular. Regrettably, these studies have very often been carried away by melange of statistics of ill-recorded coin hoards. Thus, for example, the ascription of the aforesaid series to specific individuals or to specific periods remains highly speculative. Though some of these exponents are aware of the localiza-

tion of these coin-types,[15] yet an attempt has been made to rationalize their operation in terms of such vague notions as "needs of *mid-distance* trade" and "*medium-size* transactions" (*emphasis added*).[16] R.S. Sharma has convincingly reiterated the case for the paucity of coinage between the seventh and the tenth centuries within the present boundaries of India.[17] He has rightly highlighted the "economic implications of numbers", specially the purchasing power of coins in question and the volume of money in circulation in relation to the rising population[18] as well as expanding area of settlement. Thus, it is argued by him on the basis of figures given in contemporary accounts about army personnel that if 10 per cent of people were enrolled in the regiments, evidently supplied by the vassals, the total population under Harṣa would come to nearly 20 million.[19] By the same formula the total number of people of the middle Ganga plains under the Mauryas could be six million. He estimates that the total number of coins in *c.* AD 500-1000 known from various sources and collections[20] may not exceed 25,000, most of which are of rather poor quality. The same sources and collections indicate that the total number of coins between *c.* 200 BC and AD 300 could be nearly 90,000 and would include beautiful gold and silver coins. Even copper coins of this period had much more weight than was the case with the post-Gupta coins in this metal.

The theme of this paper is related to the degree and levels of monetization during the centuries when coinage seems to have revived, particularly after the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Very often the contenders of the penetration of monetary economy invoke literary and epigraphic allusions to numerous terms purporting to describe various types of coins of early medieval India. Thus, texts such as *Dvayāśraya-kāvya*, *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, *Līlāvatī*, *Upakeśagacchapaṭṭāvalī*, *Dravyaparīkṣā*, *Purātanaprabandha-saṃgraha*, *Khartaragacchapaṭṭāvalī*, *Lekhapaddhati*, *Gaṇitasāra*, etc. mention *bhāgaka*, *rūpaka*, *viṃśatika*, *kārṣāpaṇa*, *sūrpa*, *dīnāra*, *dramma*, *niṣka*, *ṭanka*, *akṣa*, *gadhaiyā- mudrā*, *pārūthaka*, *kākiṇi*, *gadyāṇaka* and many other coins with their multiples. No less prolific are epigraphic references; for example, the Siyaḍoṇi inscription alone refers to varieties of *drammas* in the mid-tenth century. The Paramāra, Caulukya, Cāhamāna, Pratihāra, Pāla and Candella inscriptions corroborate most of the terms found in contemporary literature.[21] There has also been considerable speculation about the value of these coins, their metal content and their relationship with one another.[22] Nothing could be more simplistic than to suggest the penetration of money in the market simply on the basis of cataloguing of numismatic gleanings from a mixed bag of inscriptions and literature. Such reconstructions often betray a complete absence of the knowledge of complexities of monetary economy. It is imperative that we undertake a careful scrutiny of not only the text of the aforesaid allusions to coins and their denominations but also the context in which they occur. Whether they are mentioned in the context of transactions in the rural areas or in the urban setting, the types of exchange centres and the nature of "market" where these transactions take place, the personnel involved in these exchanges, how far are the epigraphic allusions to coins only notional—these are some of the aspects

requiring detailed exploration, if any meaningful understanding of the cash nexus is to be acquired.[23]

The inscriptions of the Śilāhāras mention more than a dozen terms which are taken to be references to coins. These include *dramma*, *porutha/poruthi/ poruthaka dramma*, *dīnāra*, *gadyāṇa / gadyāṇaka*, *kumāragadyāṇaka*, *suvarṇa*, *niṣka*, *haga*, *hoṅga/honnu*, *aḍḍa*, *paṇa*, *pomma*, *visova/viṃśopaka* and *soḷasa*.[24] These have been mentioned in a very stereotyped way by V.V. Mirashi[25] and a few of these have been discussed by other scholars too, but within the traditional format.[26]

Any attempt to undertake a contextual analysis of numismatic terms must begin by underlining that *all* terms figure as part of various donations recorded in stone and copperplate inscriptions. This, however, would be an oversimplification, for, these allusions are indeed extremely detailed and complex in many cases.

Dramma is easily the most conspicuous of all the coins mentioned in the Śilāhāra records. Chronologically, it is the earliest—it occurs in the Kanheri Cave inscription of Pullaśakti dated in the Śaka year 765 (AD 822).[27] Quantitatively, its allusions are the most prolific—featuring in 14 records[28] and in some of them even in the form of multiple donations. The peak is represented in the Thana plates of Mummuṇirāja dated in ŚE 970 (AD 1048), where as many as 23 donations in *dramma* are listed. The manifestations of descriptions of *drammas* in the Śilāhāra inscriptions are:

(i) Viṣṇugupta, an *amātya* of Pullaśakti, made a perpetual endowment of 200 *drammas* (*akṣayanīvidrammāḥ*)[29] in three separate deposits of 40, 40 and 120 *drammas* in favour of the Buddhist *saṅgha* at Kṛṣṇagiri (Kanheri). These deposits were to yield 29 *drammas* per annum which were to be spent on the worship of the Buddha, repairs of the *vihāra*, clothes of monks and books at the rate of 20, 3, 5 and one *dramma* respectively. This is the only reference in the Śilāhāra records which enables us to work out the rate of interest on cash deposits. It is fourteen and half per cent per annum. Interestingly, the dispensation of the *drammas* accruing as an interest was to be guarded like one's wife and sons.

(ii) The Kanheri Cave inscription of ŚE 775 (AD 853)[30] refers to another perpetual endowment (*akṣayanīviḥ dramma*).[31] It was made by one *gomin* Avighnākara, a devout worshipper of the Buddha and who had come from distant Gauḍa. Interest (*kārīm*) earned on this endowment of 100 *drammas* was to be spent on rooms for meditation (*koliveśmikā*) and clothes of monks at the *mahārāja-mahāvihāra* at Kṛṣṇagiri. The donor retained the right to use the interest during his lifetime but provided that "competent people *shall* fix the interest and *shall* necessarily donate it (for the same purpose)". The amount of interest has remained unspecified. The deed was approved and confirmed in the presence of the venerable community and witnessed by Pāttiyāṇakayoga[32] and an *ācārya* of Cikhyallapallikā.

(iii) In ŚE 799 was made an endowment of 100 *drammas* by Veva (Vena?) for the monks of the Buddhist *mahāvihāra* at Kanheri.[33] The purpose of the donation was the same as in (ii). Indeed, the donor of (ii) was one of the witnesses in the present case.

(iv) The Bhadana grant of Aparājita[34] dated ŚE 919 (AD 997) records that the *nagara* (guild) of Guṇapura was to pay 260 *drammas* per annum to the "royal family as a gift of veneration" (*rājakulasya arhaṇābhāvyārtham*),[35] evidently out of the revenue of the donated village situated in the Māhirihāra-*viṣaya*. The village was donated for the worship of the holy sun-god Loṇāditya and for the repairs of his temple. Some important aspects of this grant are :

(a) The guild of Guṇapura consisted of merchants Ambuśreṣṭhin and Vāppaiyaśreṣṭhin, the village official Celapaiya and the brāhmaṇa Govanaiya. Apparently, this guild exercised administrative and fiscal control over the temple and its lands.[36]

(b) Assuming that the rate of interest had not undergone any radical change since the days of Pullaśakti (ŚE 765),[37] the financial allocation in the present case amounted to an endowment of at least 1800 *drammas*.

(c) The beneficiary of cash inflow was the royal family.

(d) Except for a solitary reference to *dīnāra* in the Paṭṭankuḍi plates of ŚE 910 (AD 988), there is no reference to cash donations in the Śilāhāra records for more than one hundred years, that is, between the Kanheri Cave inscription of Kapardin II (ŚE 799)[38] and the present grant (ŚE 919).

(v) As a part of the government settlement (*vyavasthā*), King Cittarāja stipulated in ŚE 946 a tax structure for orchards of Karnataka brāhmaṇas.[39] While these brāhmaṇas were residing at Ciplūṇa, the orchards (*ārāmagumma*) were situated at the villages Karadaṇḍa and Kolapallikā in the Pānāḍa-*viṣaya*. Drawing sustenance from an "old custom" whereby tax should be paid by all businessmen in respect of all land enclosed on all the four sides (*vyāvahārikaiḥ*[40] *catuḥpariṣkṛta bhūmaudeyā*), the regulation laid down a tax of four *drammas* per cluster of hundred fruit-bearing arecanut trees in all orchards of aforesaid two villages.[41] As a further clarification, the deed of agreement indicated that the "settled custom is to regard fifty arecanuts as a unit while counting the arecanuts. At the time of selling the arecanut trees the tax to be paid is three per cent on the amount of sale" (*trikaśatena vikraya bhāvyam*). The *vyavasthā* was made at the bidding of *mahārājñī* Padmaladevī and with the consent of the king's five ministers and elder brāhmaṇas.[42]

(vi) In the Dive Agar plates of Cittarāja dated ŚE 949 (AD 1027) we read about the donation of an orchard by *daṇḍanāyaka* Nāgavarman to the learned brāhmaṇa Govinda.[43] The king had, on the other hand, ordered that (tax of) 20 *drammas* free from all dues were also to be given. This tax was levied on the cluster of trees in the aforesaid orchard.

(vii) The Thana plates of Nāgārjuna dated ŚE 961 (AD 1039),[44] while referring to various privileges accruing to the donee (brāhmaṇa Mādhava Paṇḍita)[45] of a plot of land in the Muñjavalīgrāma also laid down that it carried with it 300 *drammas* as the cost of the crop produced therein.[46] As in the previous case, this gift too was free from all dues. Amongst various official and non-official people to whom the grant was addressed, were included artisans and guilds.

(viii) The Thana plates of Mummuṇirāja issued in the ŚE 970 (AD 1048)[47] represents the peak of the cash nexus in Śilāhāra inscriptions. It almost amounts to a detailed budgetary provision and a meticulous accounts sheet at the same time. As already mentioned, as many as 23 donations in *dramma* are referred to in this charter. These are spelt out in two parts: first, a collective grant of six villages in the Vāreṭikā-*viṣaya* made to fourteen Karhāḍ brāhmaṇas. This part refers to the grant in the form of fixed number of *drammas* from the revenue of the villages besides one *dramma* per house and also a *kumāragadyāṇaka*. The second part records the grants of the produce partly in the form of *drammas* and partly in food grains in seven villages situated in two different *viṣayas*. In this case, individual donees were also specified. The data can be summed up in a tabular form as follows :

PART A

	Donee	*Village*	*Viṣaya*	*Quantum of gift*
(a)	14 brāhmaṇas	Ekasāla	Vāreṭikā	445 *drammas* from the revenue payable to the king out of produce in grains (*siddhāyātpalāṇḍasamam*) + *gṛhadramma* + *kumāragadyāṇaka*[48]
(b)	14 brāhmaṇas	Bhūtabali	Vāreṭikā	223 *drammas* [all other details are same as in (a)][49]
(c)	14 brāhmaṇas	Vaḍavalī	Vāreṭikā	269 *drammas* [all other details are same as in (a)][50]
(d)	14 brāhmaṇas	Asalagrama	Vāreṭikā	548 *drammas* [all other details are same as in (a)][51]
(e)	14 brāhmaṇas	name lost but refers to Ghaṇṭeśvara *kṣetra* of the village	Vāreṭikā	48 *drammas* [all other details are same as in (a)][52]
(f)	14 brāhmaṇas	Umbaravallī[53]	Vāreṭikā	50 *drammas* out of revenue [*Ruhaṇat-pañcāśaddramma*]. *gṛhadramma* and *kumāragadyāṇka* are not mentioned.[54]

It is significant that all the resources were pooled together and then allocated to donees. Nārāyaṇapaṇḍita and Divākaraiya received two shares each while the rest had only one share each.[55]

PART B

Seventy lines (97-166) of the inscription refer to grants of the produce partly in the form of *drammas* and partly in food-grains (rice measures) from fields in seven villages spread out in two *viṣayas*. The donees were seven Vāvailaka brāhmaṇas from Madhyadeśa, Karahāṭa and Purī. The details are set out as follows:

Donee	*Field (kṣetra)*	*Village*	*Viṣaya*	*Quantum (drammas)*[56]	*Quantum rice-measure*	*Other gifts*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
(a) Daddapaiya[57]	Koṭṭhāra-veḍhī	Mūlanda	Abhyantara-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	20	$1\frac{1}{2}$ *Vrīhimūḍa*	*gṛhadramma*
(b) Vāpaiya[58]	Vāḍa	Voriyala	Abhyantara-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	36	$3\frac{3}{4}$ *Vrīhimūḍa*	*gṛhadramma*
(c) Vāpaiya	Nihura	Voriyala	Abhyantara-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	18	$1\frac{1}{2}$ *Vrīhi-mūḍa* and 10 *kuṇḍavas*	*gṛhadramma*
(d) Vāpaiya	Vaula-poṇḍhā	Voriyala	Abhyantara-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	9	3 *Vrīhi-khaṇḍikā* 15 *kuḍavas*	*gṛhadramma*
(e) Damupaiya[59]	Poṇḍhā (Two fields)	Bṛhada-ḍaṇika	Śūrpāraka-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	122	$4\frac{1}{2}$ *Vrīhi-mūḍa*	*gṛhadramma and four houses*
(f) Damupaiya	Two fields in Torani					
(g) Damupaiya[60]	Three fields: Māni, Madhūka and Utteśravā	Laghu-adanika	Śūrpāraka-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	50[61]	—	one house but no *gṛha-dramma*
(h) Dāmupaiya	Kusumbhi	Khānu-vadā grāma[62]	Śūrpāraka-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	80[63]	—	No reference to *gṛhadramma* but three houses
(i) Dāmupaiya	Pimpalavāpa					
(j) Dāmupaiya	Caṇebati					
(k) Dāmupaiya	Ukkāsa					
(l) Nāgade-vaiya[64]	Two fields in Thāpaḍa	Peḍhāla-grāma				
(m) Nāgade-vaiya	Two fields in Sāliyapa	Peḍhāla-grāma	Śūrpāraka-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	100	—	*gṛhadramma* in each case
(n) Nāgade-vaiya	Jāluvoṇḍhā	Peḍhāla-grāma	Śūrpāraka-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi			

1	2	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
(o) Govindaiya[65]	Deilā, Kavaḍocchi, Kaṇi	Peḍhāla-grāma	Śūrpāraka-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	100	—	*gṛhadramma* in each case
(p) Nannapaiya[66]	Two fields in Khānu kṣetra	Peḍhāla-grāma	Śūrpāraka-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	100	—	*gṛhadramma* in each case
(q) Lokapaiya[67]	Two fields: Mājhilavāvā, Adhavailā Kaccha in Uppala-pallikā	Vīrāra	Śūrpāraka-Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi	100	—	*gṛhadramma* in each case

While the aforesaid villages were donated *with the proceeds in cash (dravyotpattisaṃyuktāḥ)*, the fields in the villages of Laghu-Aḍaṇikā and Khānuvaḍā were exempt from the payment of revenue on eleven *kusas* of rice by the Kallivana measure on their produce in food grains *brought for sale to the prosperous* (capital) *Sthānaka*. These two villages were also exempted from the *gṛhadramma*.[68] The charter was addressed to all assembled princes, counsellers, the family priest, the *amātyas*, the principal and subordinate officers, as well as the heads of *rāṣṭras*, towns, *viṣayas* and villages, royal servants whether formally appointed or not, rural people and also the artisans, guilds and the three classes of citizens and so forth.[69]

(ix) Another inscription of Mummuṇirāja dated ŚE 971 (AD 1049)[70] refers to the donation of the income of 1500 *drammas* derived from the produce of the village Ki-icchitā situated in the Maṇḍarāja-*viṣaya*.[71] The donees were twelve brāhmaṇas hailing from Gauḍa, Muñjasthāna in Madhyadeśa and Bhṛgukaccha in the Lāṭa-deśa and residing in the *agrahāra* of Brahmapurī.

(x) In the (Śaka) year 1003 (AD 1081) *gṛhadramma* in the village Khairāmaṇa were donated to Ajyapānāyaka of the Viyāḍika family.[72]

(xi) Aparāditya I, the famous author of the *Aparārka Ṭīkā* on *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* was the donor of *gṛhadramma* in the village Vaḍavalī and a field in the village Mora situated in the Karakūṭa and Vāreṭikā *viṣayas* respectively. The inscription is dated ŚE 1049 (AD 1127).[73] The grant was addressed to same people as are referred to in (viii) above.

(xii) A gift of ten *drammas* made by Viśāladeva in Śaka year 105(9) was registered in ŚE 10(70) when an orchard in the village Rānjalī was donated to Viṣṇu Upādhyāya. The cash gift, perhaps for the same donee, was meant for his maintenance (*vityatrā nimita*).[74] The grant was made with the consent of all inhabitants headed by Devalanāyaka.

(xiii) The temple of Somanāthadeva in Saurashtra was the recipient of (a) four *drammas* out of proceeds of an orchard in Sthānakīyapāṭṭaṇa and (b) 24 *drammas* out of the produce of whole rice field. While the former were to be spent on each of five holy occasions every year: *caitrika*, *pavitrika*, *śivarātri*, *dakṣiṇāyaṇa* and *uttarāyaṇa*, the latter were to be paid at the time of harvest. The gift was made in the ŚE 1107 (AD 1185) by Lakṣmaṇanāyaka, the *mahāmātya* of Aparāditya.[75]

(xiv) 24 *drammas* out of the proceeds of an orchard belonging to Anantapai in the village Māhavali (Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi-*viṣaya*) were granted by the Śilāhāra king, Aparāditya, in favour of the divine Vaidyanātha of Darbhāvalī in ŚE 1108 (AD 1186).[76]

Coins other than *drammas* figure rather sporadically in the Śilāhāra inscriptions. Out of more than a dozen coin names in this category, *dīnāras* are the earliest. The solitary occurrence of *dīnāras* is available in the Pattanakudi plates of ŚE 910 (AD 988) which belong to Avasara II (?) of the south Konkan branch.[77] According to this record, three merchants named Nāgai-śreṣṭhin, Lokkai-śreṣṭhin and Ādityavarman paid 40 *dīnāras* as *pādapūjā* to the reigning king for the confirmation of *jīvaloka* (certain hereditary source of maintenance) in the villages Kiñjala and Pulīsa.[78] In addition, they were to pay two lakh areca-nuts by way of an annual cess for the expenses of betel-box bearer (*haḍapa*). The share of Nāgai was, however, exempted from this cess.[79] The agreement was made known to the *mantrin*, *amātya*, *haḍapa*, Ukkai-śreṣṭhin, other principal royal officers, all people whether young or old, the guilds and artisans, the members of the five monasteries as well as three monasteries.[80] Mirashi is surprised about such a late occurrence of *dīnāras* in Śilāhāra records. While it is true, one cannot accept his assumption that *gadyāṇas* are mentioned before *dīnāras*. *Gadyāṇas* are mentioned only once in an inscription of ŚE 930 (AD 1108).[81] The Kharepatan plates of *māṇḍalika* Raṭṭarāja issued in this year, record the grant of three villages to preceptor Ātreya for worshipping the holy god Avveśvara and keeping his temple in proper repair, for providing food and raiment to ascetics.[82] It is in the same context that we are told about some additional gifts, viz., a *gadyāṇa* of gold from every vessel coming from foreign lands, and a *dharaṇa* of gold from every ship coming from Kandalamūlīya, excepting Cemūlya and Candrapura.[83] The settlement of families of female attendants, oil-men, gardeners, potters and washermen is also referred to.[84] It seems that the temple was situated within the fortified capital of Balipattana. As already mentioned, *kumāragadyāṇakas* figure in the Thana plates of ŚE 970[85] where fourteen brāhmaṇa donees derived revenue from six villages in the form of *drammas*. Other associated privileges in most of these donations were *gṛhadrammas* (house-tax) and a *kumāragadyāṇaka* (perhaps per house).[86]

If *dīnāras* were the earliest outside the realm of *dramma's* popularity, *hoṅga* ranked only second in terms of the number of references. Interestingly, while the *drammas* remained confined to the north Konkan Śilāhāras, *hoṅgas* are not found beyond the inscriptions of the Kolhapur branch. Also, the earliest occurrence of any coin in the Kolhapur branch inscriptions is in ŚE 1058, that is more than 75 years after the Śilāhāras had established themselves in this area. That is the year when *hoṅga* was mentioned in the Kolhapur stone inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya. In addition, *hoṅgas* are also mentioned in the Miraj stone inscription of his successor Vijayāditya in the Śaka years 1065 and 1066. In both cases these coins figure in the donations made by traders and merchants and their organizations/corporations.

The Kolhapur stone inscription ŚE 1058 (AD 1136)[87] is conspicuous for its *praśasti* of the *Vīra-Baṇañjas*,[88] a corporation of heroic traders of Ayyāvoḷe

(Ahicchatra), references to various categories of traders and the description of the hierarchy of Jaina monastic establishment. The gift was made to Śrutakīrti Traividyadeva of the Pustakagaccha in the Deśīyagaṇa of the Mūlasaṃgha, who was the priest of Rūpanārāyaṇa, the Jaina temple at Kolhapura. The corporation consisting of the *gavaṛes*, the *gātriyas*, the *seṭṭis*, the *seṭṭiguttas*, the *gāmaṇḍas* and the *gāmaṇḍa-svāmins*, certain prominent traders and merchants of Kollāpur, Miriñje and Baleyavaṭṭana, the chief of Kavadegoḷḷa and the royal Mayisige, the Sheriff of Kavadegoḷḷa and the royal merchant (*rājaśreṣṭhin*)[89] levied taxes and dues on commodities for the benefit of Pārśvanātha's temple situated in the *market place* of Kavadegoḷḷa.[90] These levies were both in kind and cash and included:[91] (a) areca-nuts, (b) betel leaves, (c) one *sollage* (on each pitcher of clarified butter and oil), (d) *palas* on cloth, (e) *bīsige* on *karuse*, (f) items of furniture on carpenters' houses, (g) specific quantities of vegetables and spices (green ginger, turmeric, garlic, dry ginger, cummin, black pepper, salt and mustard), (h) eighteen kinds of grains, (i) dry and fresh fruit, (j) products of florists and potters. It is in such a long and varied list of levies that we read about "a *paṇa* on each *hoṅga* on articles sold in each shop of cloth merchant and goldsmith".[92] Levies in kind are often mentioned in terms of differing units of cart-loads and head-loads.

The second evidence of *hoṅga*, which is available in the Miraj stone inscription of Vijayāditya,[93] is more or less in the same strain as seen in the aforesaid Kolhapur record. Vijayāditya's record is in two parts, each mentioning specific levies in two different years: ŚE 1065 and 1066—*hoṅgas* are mentioned only in the former. Apart from the components of the *Vīra-Baṇañjas*, the record mentions nearly a score of *seṭṭis* by name, the *baccas*, the bangle-sellers and scent merchants, who are residents of thirty-two coastal towns, eighteen cities and sixty-four *ghaṭikā-sthānas*.[94] Assembling as a general body of representatives of different districts such as Piriyugavāra, Siriguppe, Juguḷakoppa and (?) geya, they granted certain dues on the occasion of the Friday market at Seḍambāl. Levies in cash and kind and on such commodities as mentioned in the Kolhapur record are noticeable in the present case as well. *Hoṅgas* are referred to in the following terms:

(a) twenty areca-nuts per *hoṅga* from purchaser,[95]

(b) a *hāga* on each *hoṅga* for those who examine stamped *paṇas*,[96] specifically donated by *seṭṭiguttas* and

(c) one *aḍḍa* to be paid by goldsmiths as the assay-fee of each *hoṅga*.[97]

This record too imposes levies in kind in terms of cart-loads, head-loads, ass-loads, bullock-loads, shoulder bags and is also conspicuous for impositions on such petty artisans as shoe-makers, basket-makers and cobblers.

Mirashi has, while translating the Shedabal stone inscription of ŚE 1075 (AD 1153),[98] referred to *honnus*. According to him a tax was imposed on cloth sold by the traders' guild at the rate of one *vīsā* per *honnu*. A close scrutiny of the text, however, shows that it is a mistake for *hoṅga*.[99]

Other coins figuring exclusively in the inscriptions of Kolhapur Śilāhāras include *hāga*, *aḍḍa*, *pomma*, *soḷasa*, *suvarṇa*, *paṇa* and *rajata niṣka*. Most of

these are found in the Miraj stone inscription of Vijayāditya referred to above. Of these, only *hāgas*[100] are mentioned more than once. In the Miraj inscription itself it occurs thrice as *seṭṭiguttas*' donations in the form of:

(i) a *hāga* on each *horiga* for those who examine stamped *paṇas*,[101]

(ii) one *hāga* to be given by the people of the town (Seḍaṃbāl) on each marriage for the festival in *Caitra*[102] and

(iii) one *hāga* per house to be given by the members of the guilds of the town for oil required for the lamps lighted on the occasion of Dīpāvalī.[103]

The Shedabal inscription of the reign of Vijayāditya and dated in ŚE 1075 (AD 1153)[104] also refers to *hāgas*. Goldsmiths named Nāgoja and Reva-*gāvuṇḍa* assigned such taxes to the local assemblies of guilds as were imposed *ad valorem*. These taxes were to be shared equally by the *basadi* and temple at the place. The allocation was to be implemented by Reva- *gāvuṇḍa* himself (one of the donors) in consultation with the assemblies of guilds. Amongst these impositions (*davaṇāya*) we read that for (each) marriage celebrated with the beating of drums in the street, and the marriage celebrated in Cinnakkari, (a tax of) a *hāga* was to be paid for cloth of (that is, sold by?) the traders' guilds.[105] The same inscription is also supposed to be having the solitary reference to *honnus*, when it mentions the levying of a tax on the sale of cloth.[106] As already mentioned, this is clearly a mistake for *horiga*.

The two grants of Śaka years 1065 and 1066 referred to in the Miraj stone inscription mention following coins in terms of dues:[107]

(i) two *soḷasa* on a pitcher of oil,[108]

(ii) two *soḷasa* on a pitcher of clarified butter,[109]

(iii) one *aḍḍa* to be paid by the goldsmiths as an assay-fee of each *horiga*,[110]

(iv) a *pomma* on loads of betel-leaves[111] and

(v) one-eighth on each *suvarṇṇa* per month to be paid by the toll collectors on duty in the revenue office.[112]

Both *pomma* and *suvarṇṇa* figure in the donations made by Bhāyipayya Nāyaka, the *mahāpradhāna* and Controller of Customs (*surikaverggaḍe*) and Māḷapayya Nāyaka, the Superintendent of Markets (*kreṇikāran*) of the Mirinjenāḍa.[113] The levy of *pommas* was to be paid by the oil-men and shopkeepers in the paddy market of Seḍaṃbāl.

A levy of one *paṇa* on each *horiga* on articles sold in shops of each cloth merchant and goldsmith is mentioned in the Kolhapur stone inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya.[114] The Kutāpura grant of Bhoja II and dated in ŚE 1113 (AD 1191) which is the last known inscription of the Śilāhāras of Konkan makes an allusion to *rajata niṣka*. While referring to the grant of thirty *nivartanas* of land in the village named Kutāpura to *dharmādhikārin* Govinda Bhaṭṭavardhana, it mentions the levy of a silver *niṣka* on every village (*more probably every house*)[115] in the territory marking the delimitation of Kutāpura.

Vīsās or *visovas* first occur in an inscription of the Kolhapur Śilāhāras, viz., the Shedabal stone inscription of Vijayāditya dated in ŚE 1075 (AD 1153).[116] They are also referred to in the last inscription of the north Konkan branch, viz., the Chanje stone inscription of Someśvara of ŚE 1182 (AD 1260).[117] The donors of the former record have already been mentioned above and so is the context. Amongst the *ad valorem* impositions was the levy of one *vīsā* per *horiga* (not *honnu*)[118] on cloth sold by traders' guild. Someśvara's inscription records grants in favour of the temple of god Uttareśvara at Sthānaka. In addition to the gift of an orchard in the village Chāṇḍije,[119] the beneficiary also received ten *visovas* and 162 *poruttha drammas*.[120] Further, *bīsige* referred to in the Kolhapur stone inscription, [121] is considered to be a variant of *viṃśopaka* or *visova*. Two *bīsiges* were levied on each *maḷave* of *karuse* sold from carts.[122]

Finally, the *poruttha drammas* which are also described as *poruthi* or *porūthaka drammas*. These are mentioned only in the records of the north Konkan Śilāhāras. Apart from the Chanje stone inscription mentioned above, the Lonad stone inscription of Aparāditya II dated ŚE 1106 (AD 1184)[123] also mentions *porutha drammas*. The latter grants a field situated in the Veharali village (hamlet) included in the Dahasagrāma (Ṣaṭṣaṣṭi-*viṣaya*). The grant was made by Bhopaka Vyomaśambhu in favour of Vyomeśvaradeva (Śiva). Accompanying this were other gifts in the form of *porutha drammas*.[124] These included:

(a) 100 for services to the god,

(b) 30 for the *mahābhoga* of the god for ten years,

(c) thereafter another 30 *poruthi drammas* for (?), and

(d) 30 for offerings to Umā-Śiva.

In addition, two houses free of taxes (*akareṇa*) were also granted to the beneficiary.

A perusal of actual numismatic finds is a *sine qua non* for a fuller discussion of the problem under consideration. It does not require much labour to stress that the volume of numismatic evidence is almost negligible, as far as the Śilāhāras are concerned. One of the earliest notices in this context was a coin of Cittarāja published by E.J. Rapson in 1900.[125] It is considered to be a coin of Gadhaiya type. While the Gadhaiya coins datable between the eleventh and twelfth centuries are fairly well known from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, their dispersal in Maharashtra seems to be somewhat uneven. Two hoards of doubtful ascription have been reported from Ratnagiri and Satara—in the latter case, the Gadhaiya pieces are said to have been found in association with Traikūṭaka and the Western Kṣatrapa coins. Three hoards consisting of 630 silver (?) Gadhaiya coins were found at Thana between 1925 and 1956, while another one (comprising 203 coins) was reported from Andheri (Bombay) in 1953.[126] In the absence of any detailed discussion, specific ascription of these coins remains a desideratum.

The excavations at Brahmapuri (Kolhapur) conducted in 1945-46 had yielded 128 coins. It is claimed that *two* tiny gold coins (nos. 732A and 1268)

found in square IV (layer 4) below the walls of the first Bahmani buildings were the "first gold coins of the Kolhapur branch of the Śilāhāra dynasty found so far".[127] The coins with 0.5" diameter and weighing about 2.5 grains (0.162 grammes) each do not have any legends, yet M.G. Dikshit ascribes them to the Śilāhāras on the following grounds:

(a) *triśūla*, which figures on the obverse, is comparable with the engraving on the Miraj plates of Mārasiṃha (ŚE 980),

(b) *garuḍa*, which figures on the reverse, was the *lāñchana* of the Śilāhāras,

(c) identical coins were reported to have been found at Bid (a village about 25 kms. southwest of Kolhapur, Śilāhāra capital),

(d) fabric of these coins has affinities with the coinage of the contemporary Kadamba rulers of Goa,[128] and

(e) stratigraphically, the coins have to be placed after the tenth century.[129]

None of these arguments is particularly strong. We are particularly intrigued by the absence of any legends on these precious metal coins.

Ter, situated on the banks of Terna in the Osmanabad district and identified with Tagara, the original capital of the Śilāhāras and the place from where "all branches of the Śilāhāras migrated"[130] was first excavated in 1957-58.[131] Though the site was a prosperous settlement in the early centuries of the Christian era, it seems to have been abandoned after the fourth century. One looks in vain for any evidence of coins of the Śilāhāras, though an ancient city-state coin of Tagara has been reported and ascribed to the period between the second and first centuries BC on palaeographic grounds.[132] Even the more recent excavations at Ter conducted in the 1960s have been conspicuously unproductive from the point of view of the post-Gupta settlements in general and coins in particular.[133]

In 1979, a tiny earthen pot containing one hundred silver coins was discovered at Harmal in Pednem taluka of Goa.[134] Originally, these coins were ascribed to the Śilāhāras and put between AD 750 and 820. Later, however, the date was revised as tenth century AD. These coins bear *triśūla* without handle and sun and moon on the obverse. The legend on the reverse has been variously read as *Śrīdara* or *Sri ha ra*. A recent study of these coins argues that the legend actually refers to Śrīdhara. However, since *dha* was not so developed in the inscriptions of the eleventh century, it reads only Śrīdhara.[135] It is unintelligible why should it be so when this Śrīdhara is identified with Śrīdhara paṇḍita of the Kharepatan copperplates of Śilāhāra Anantadeva I (ŚE 1016 = AD 1094). Nor is it very plausible that a mere "door-keeper of the king" (Śrīdhara paṇḍita)[136] would have been allowed to issue such coins. There is, on the whole, considerable truth in a recent assessment of the numismatic scene of the Śilāhāras: "In spite of the large number of kings of this dynasty... comparatively very few coins have been discovered. There is no evidence that Śilāhāra coins existed before the period of Chittarāja who was ruling around the middle of the eleventh century".[137]

The Nature of the Cash Nexus: Some Issues and Reflection

It is being recognized that the post-Gupta centuries can be understood in two phases, specially from the point of view of metallic money. The first of these phases, covering up to at least the mid-ninth century, is marked by conspicuous paucity of coinage. The centuries between the late ninth and early thirteenth, representing the second phase, witnessed the revival of money, even though its purchasing power was somewhat inferior. The Śilāhāras obviously belong to the latter phase. But the question that concerns us is the degree of the penetration of money on the west coast under their suzerainty. We argue for an extremely limited monetization of economy, which was not able to make any significant dent in the predominant feudal socio-economic formation despite revival of trade—both inland and long-distance overseas trade. We would also like to stress that the rural-urban nexus ought to be seen in dichotomous terms.

To start with, the following noticeable features may be kept in view:

(i) Out of 400 years being surveyed here, there is no evidence of monetary transaction for more than 110 years (ŚE 799-910) in any of the three branches of the Śilāhāras.

(ii) The Kolhapur branch of the dynasty is known to us from nineteen inscriptions ranging between ŚE 980 and 1113, that is, 133 years. Only four of these inscriptions (nos. 52, 55, 58 and 64) refer to money in some form or the other. More significantly, there is no indication of the use of coinage for at least the first 75 years of the history of Mārasiṃha and his successors. Even Gaṇḍarāditya's reign lasting for about 33 years (ŚE 1032-65) has drawn almost a complete blank for its first 25 years.

(iii) The usage of various types and denominations of coins are rather localized. Though each of the three branches had precious metal coins in gold and/or silver, there is none which operated throughout the area under investigation. To illustrate, *drammas*, *kumāragadyāṇakas* and *poruttha drammas* are not known outside the territory of the north Konkan Śilāhāras, whereas the *horigas*, *suvarṇṇas* and *rajataniṣka* find mention only in the inscriptions of the Kolhapur branch. Similarly, the *dharaṇas*, *dīnāras* and *gadyāṇas* were apparently in use by inhabitants of the territory under the sway of south Konkan Śilāhāras. This element of localism is also applicable to coins in baser metals such as copper or those of low denomination. First, no such coins are mentioned in inscriptions of the south Konkan branch. Second, *Visovas* (supposed to be 1/20 *dramma*) issued in copper are known only from the records of the north Konkan Śilāhāras. Finally, most of the low denomination/baser metal coins found in Śilāhāra inscriptions are confined to the Kolhapur branch. These include *paṇas*, *hāga* (1/4 *paṇa*), *aḍḍa* (1/2 *paṇa*), *soḷasa*, *pomma* and *bīsige*.

(iv) Amongst major references to metallic money, barring *gadyāṇas* and *dharaṇas*, a great majority belong to land-based economic activities. These, for instance, include references to *drammas* in association with areca-nuts, cluster of trees, orchards, as cost of crop produced, as

proceeds of orchards and rice-fields; areca-nuts in relation to *horigas*; *pommas* on loads of betel leaves, etc. Even a small denomination coin such as the *visova* figures along with the gift of an orchard. These details assume further significance when it is realized that the role of "market" in the Śilāhāra economy seems to have been somewhat limited.

(v) A general proposition was made above that all references to money were essentially components of varieties of donations. It is equally significant that levies in kind are no less an integral part of this nexus. The grants in terms of *vrīhi-mūḍas*, *kuḍavas vrīhi-khaṇḍikas* along with *drammas* and such levies as areca-nuts, betel leaves, clarified butter and oil, items of furniture such as stool, tripod, bedstead, etc., pair of slippers and straps are indicative of an obvious blend of cash and kind levies. Further, when we read that the donation of villages with proceeds in cash went along with exemption from the payment of revenue on specific quantity of *kusas* of rice,[138] it may be seen as a further indicator of limited monetization.

(vi) It is well known that once the cash system comes into use, even when it falls into comparative disuse, the old practice of computing prices and payments in cash continues. It is, therefore, not improbable that some of the allusions to cash donations may have been spelt out only in a notional sense rather than in specific monetary terms.[139] We draw this inference on the basis of the gift of a tax of 20 *drammas* free from all dues 'with libations of water'[140] (*udakāti-sarggeṇa*). According to epigraphic conventions, this is mentioned while making the ceremonial gift of an object which cannot be placed in donee's hands.[141] Surely, gift of hard cash would not fall in this category.

A recent case study of early medieval Rajasthan of comparable time span has attempted to work out a trade network including the role of money therein.[142] Briefly, it argues for proliferation of local centres of exchange situated within the domains of emergent Rajput lineages. These centres were points of intersection for traffic of varying origins giving rise to a certain measure of hierarchy. The network was further elaborated with the growth of merchant lineages in the eleventh and twelfth centuries which operated both at the interregional and intraregional levels. The range of merchandise started probably with agricultural produce (including dairy products) but extended to such high-value items as horses, elephants, horned animals and jewels. All this activity took place with only "partial monetization".

The situation on the western coast under the Śilāhāras is not very encouraging. It is true that we read about Sthānaka as a centre of sale,[143] Friday market and paddy market at Seḍambāḷ,[144] and about the superintendent of market (*kreṇikāra*)[145] but it is impossible to work out even a modicum of market network. It is also true that a few goldsmiths are mentioned by name (Kakkala and Somaiya,[146] Govyoja and Bammyoja[147] and Nāgoja[148]), and that people and authorities to whom grants are addressed include artisans and trading guilds, there is a mention of 35 *seṭṭis* (traders and merchants) by name and there is even

an allusion to "additional taxes levied out of greed for wealth" (*dravyādilobhāt nimitta siddhāyādadhikam*).[149] But it is still rather difficult to ascribe large-scale mercantile activity buttressed by entrenched monetary economy. Amongst the economic products figuring in the Śilāhāra records, areca-nuts alone stand out as principal commercial crop. Other items indicative of nature of economic activity include agricultural products such as vegetables, spices (green ginger, turmeric, garlic, dry ginger, cummin, black pepper, mustard), eighteen kinds of grains (unspecified), betel leaves, fruits such as coconut, jackfruit, mango, dairy products such as clarified butter and oil, products of florists and potters, items of household furniture and finally salt and cloth. One looks in vain for such high-value goods as are found to be entering into the trade network in Rajasthan. This can also be taken as an indicator of the limited long-distance overseas trade, notwithstanding some big vessel-owning merchants in control of ports such as Balipaṭṭana and Śūrpāraka. Where are such big items of import as horses? We recognize that the existence of long-distance trade is not a *sine qua non* for vibrant mercantile activity and indeed it is perfectly feasible that growth of markets is not solely dependent on interregional and international trade. A study of England between 1200 and 1349 clearly shows the phenomenal "proliferation of markets" "closely related to the growth of *local trade* between food producers, craftsmen and tradesmen, which advanced most vigorously in the context of continuing agricultural development"[150] (*emphasis added*). But, as already mentioned, the evidence for small localized markets is also not very encouraging. While we know about thousands of "weekly markets" in medieval England[151] and numerous *haṭṭas* in early medieval Rajasthan,[152] the evidence from the Śilāhāra inscriptions does not enable us to assert any perceptible multiplication of markets. That land occupied a more conspicuous place in the overall economic structure is possible to infer from:

(i) references to 66 fields, very often identified in terms of crops sown;

(ii) 18 instances of donations of plot of land mentioned in six inscriptions;[153]

(iii) 15 epigraphs[154] recording donation of 26 villages;

(iv) 17 allusions to donations of orchards in 16 inscriptions;[155]

(v) 18 fields as objects of donations in 14 inscriptions,[156] and

(vi) numerous donations of crop produce.

The issue that concerns us is not the extent of marketization, whether at the rural or the urban plane; it is not even the debatable proposition of the trade network—local, interregional or international—but the role of money in the broad economic spectrum. It has been postulated in the context of England that "the volume of the English currency was rising like a rocket between 1180 and 1280",[157] even though markets thrived only on local trade. A major catalyst in the proliferation of markets in medieval England was the initiative of landlords but "increasing monetary transactions also derived from occupational adaptations to landlessness and poverty in rural society".[158] On the other hand, a more subtle role is ascribed to money in the west European economy of medieval times marked by two productive systems which were at once opposed and

complementary, viz., the seigneurial reserve producing for the market (international) and the peasant holding producing enough to feed the rural population. Recognizing that metallic coins accounted for only a small portion of all the exchanges which were based on fiduciary currency or paper transactions, essential role played by "money of account" has been postulated by Maurice Aymard.[159] The Śilāhāra evidence does not permit us to assert either the rocket-like rise of the volume of money or to propose the operation of sophisticated "fiduciary currency".

The limited cash nexus under the Śilāhāras may also be suggested on the basis of the tax structure. Apart from certain general terms such as *deṇaka*, *davaṇāya*, *siddhāya* and in addition to well established taxes such as *bali*, *bhāga*, *bhoga*, *udraṅga* and *uparikara*, there are very few specific taxes mentioned in the records under survey. A tax on houses/accommodation is mentioned as *gṛhadramma*, *gṛhadeṇaka* and *paḍaṇaka*. Unfortunately, the bases of this levy remain unspecified.[160] Tax on trees of areca-nuts and a few levies which remain unidentified (e.g., *aruvaṇa*, *kodevaṇa*) are also noticeable. *Bhūmideṇaka* was, of course, a sort of land tax. How does money figure in this structure? Apart from the cess on houses, which was evidently collected in cash, we are also told about some levies imposed on ships coming from distant lands and calling at certain specific ports. These levies were being paid in *gadyāṇas* and *dharaṇas*.[161] We also come across toll collectors.[162] But can we simultaneously suggest the emergence of "some form of commercial revenue system",[163] as has been mooted for early medieval Rajasthan? The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya gives a good impressionistic idea of the revenues from *rāṣṭra* (countryside) and *durga* (fortified settlements/towns).[164] If "commercial revenue" means revenue from trade, towns, artisans, merchants, etc. one has to find more evidence for it in the period under discussion. The decline of towns undermined the ability of the tradesmen to pay taxes in the Gupta and post-Gupta times. A Sanskrit commentary of *c.* AD 1275 on a Jain Prākrit text entitled *Bṛhat Kalpa Sūtra* mentions that village was oppressed with eighteen types of taxes (*aṣṭādaśakarāḥ*) but *nagara* (town) was *nakara* (non-taxpaying).[165] As for the specific data from the inscriptions of the Śilāhāras, unlike Rajasthan, the western coast is silent about *mārga-* and *maṇḍapikā-dāyas*. Apparently, the proposition of the "commercial revenue system" derives sustenance from the assumption that the "ruling elites themselves are not directly involved in the collection" of revenue. If the "ruling elites" are to be identified only in terms of the king and state officials, then perhaps one may be tempted to agree with such a formulation. But the Śilāhāra records show otherwise, as we shall see below. Also, *ad hoc* levies intended as contributions to religious institutions, which are mentioned prominently in these records, are excluded from the purview of the commercial revenue system. Finally, an incontrovertible fact of immediate relevance is the payment of levies in cash as well as kind which only highlights the limited role of the cash nexus.

Role of money in a society can also be understood in terms of the rate of interest on investments and loans. While there is no evidence of the latter, there

is at least one inscription which enlightens us about the return on an investment made by an individual in favour of the Buddhists. The earliest inscription of the Śitāhāras viz., the Kanheri cave inscription of Pullaśakti offers data enabling us to work out 14.5 per cent per annum as the prevalent rate of interest. While it is not very easy to find a comparable situation, an analysis of the cumulative evidence of literature and epigraphs of early medieval Rajasthan shows that the rate of interest varied between 10 and 33.3 per cent per annum. Generally, historians have tried to explain such a phenomenon in terms of the money supply. Thus, the high rate at Bhinmal (30 per cent-33.33 per cent) was the result of the need to encourage donations while the low rate (12 per cent) mentioned in the Jalor inscription (VS 1323 = AD 1266) was possible because of the capital being easily available. Similarly, a deposit in the Mahāvīra temple at Arāsaṇa fetched only 10 per cent interest which is sought to be explained thus: "its credit was high and with the rich Jain community to patronise it, it had no need of bringing in fresh deposits by promising high rates of interest".[166] It has also been argued that the increase in the rate of interest "does not seem to be so much the result of a stronger tendency of exploitation or of the growing importance of the rentier class as of the comparative absence of coins and decline of trade".[167] Occasionally, disturbed political conditions also account for fluctuating rates of interest. Possibilities of these factors notwithstanding, there is a need to raise certain questions if a proper understanding of interest rates is to be acquired from sheer economic standpoint.[168]

(a) Who is the depositor/agent of investment—an individual, community or the state?

(b) Who is the beneficiary of the deposit? Since in the present case the depositor was not to reap the fruits of return, he could afford to be unconcerned about it. For him it was once in a lifetime donation. However, in another inscription from Kanheri the donor states specifically: "endowment will be used by me so long as I live. On my death competent persons shall fix interest and shall necessarily donate it (for same purpose)".[169]

(c) Is the deposit being put to any productive use?

(d) What is the nature of liaison between the donor and the donee?

(e) Is the rate of interest "real" or "monetary"? The former takes cognizance of the pressure of inflationary tendencies.

(f) How "representative" is the rate? This is seen as an important element for speculating money supply.

(g) What is the catchment area?

Our objective in raising these questions is only to underline that the explanation of the rate of interest in terms of money supply is an oversimplification and that it calls for a more intensive analysis of the actual functioning of the cash nexus. Since in case of the Śilāhāras such cash transactions are endowments and religious donations and not investments, it may not be possible or even necessary to answer the questions raised above. However a dialectic

relationship exists between the rate of interest on the one hand and investment-savings on the other. Also, if the supply of money is regarded as a factor, we cannot be oblivious to the speculative demand of money as well, which is no less integrally linked with the rate of interest. Finally, what about the "transaction demand" of money? After all, in a society based on monetary economy cash liquidity should be an important consideration.[170] An interesting example of cycle of cash and non-cash resources is seen in the Kolhapur stone inscription of Bhoja II recording three donations between Śaka years 1112 and 1115. The second of these made in ŚE 1114 (AD 1192) refers to a donation of some land and some houses. The donor (Kāliyaṇa Nāyaka) purchased it from the *mahājanas*, who had in turn purchased it for a gift from the previous owner, Lakhumaṇa Ghaisāsa.[171]

The early medieval evidence also throws important light on many other aspects of the network of interest bearing a close relationship with the changing socio-economic formation. The consideration of *varṇa* in determining the rate of interest; detailed laws on the growing practice of loans in kind, including food grains and milk products; the emergence of *kāyika* or bodily interest as a form of interest paid through services; and the introduction of land in the mechanism of early medieval mode of interest—all these fit in the economic scenario marked by limited monetary transactions and reflect the lesser capacity of members of lower order to repay their debt.[172]

Who constituted the ruling elite? Answer to this question has a bearing on the functioning of the cash nexus. Though the grants recorded in the Śilāhāra inscriptions sometimes mention that they were made with the "approval of all people" or "in the presence of a number of people",[173] a more careful scrutiny reveals an unhealthy clique, consisting of the king, state officials, brāhmaṇas[174] and prominent *seṭṭis*,[175] which seems to be calling the actual shots. Very often, it is more than apparent that the clique was concerned with narrow selfish ends.

We may begin with the *praśastis* of the *Vīra-Baṇañjas* representing the trading guild of Ayyāvoḷe. While some have argued that such organizations were "primarily traders in various types of merchandise" and not a "single unified corporation of merchants",[176] a study of Kannada Ayyāvoḷe shows that the association formed "small and workable federations extending over a district or two".[177] There is no denying the fact that the *Vīra-Baṇañjas* operated on a trans-regional plane and had developed deep socio-economic interests between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, spreading from Bhalvani (Sangli district, Maharashtra) in the north to Kayalpattinam in Tamil Nadu in the south and even beyond—across the seas.[178]

The role of cash begins with the expectations of the rulers from traders and merchants. The professional itinerant merchants in medieval Europe during the Carolingian period were required to pay to the court in the form of goods, specially luxury items. These supplies were expected every year, or once in two years.[179] There are quite a few very specific instances in the Śilāhāra inscriptions where we find that traders and merchants were taking care of the interests

of not only the royal family but also of their close attendants, perhaps not always without selfish interests. Thus we have references to :

(i) to the guild of Guṇapura which was to pay 260 *drammas* year after year to the "royal family as a gift of veneration" (*rājakulasya arhaṇābhavyārtham*) out of the revenue of the donated village of Bhādāna;[180]

(ii) three *śreṣṭhis* (Nāgai, Lokkai and Ādityavarman) paying 40 *dīnāras* as *pādapūjā* (sort of *nazrānā*) to the reigning king, Avasara II, for the confirmation of their two *jīvalokas* (sources of maintenance);[181]

(iii) three *śreṣṭhis* making an annual payment of as many as two lakh areca-nuts for the expenses of the betel-box carrier (*haḍapa*), who must evidently have been very close to the king—one of these donors, Nāgai even managed to secure an exemption for himself;[182]

(iv) influential members of the village Turubhāmrā issuing a tough warning to prospective miscreants that if they damaged the water channels of moneylenders, they would be severely punished,[183] and to

(v) the appointment of Vesapayya as the *rājaśreṣṭhi* (royal trader)[184] by Gaṇḍarāditya in ŚE 1058. Holder of such an office must have had a distinct clout in the administrative hierarchy.

Another aspect of the relationship between the ruling elite and role of money may be seen in the mechanism of levying taxes. The *mahānāḍu* of the Ayyāvoḷe merchants was convented at Seḍambāḷ in the Śaka year 1065 to levy numerous levies in cash and kind.[185] Another instance of an assembly of the *Vīra-Baṇañjas*, *seṭṭiguttas* and many other prominent *seṭṭis* and officials meeting in the Śaka year 1058 and levying various dues is to be found in the Kolhapur stone inscription of Gaṇḍrāditya.[186] The rise of individual Ayyāvoḷe merchants to positions of great power and influence in the court during the time of the Hoysaḷas in Kannada areas is well-known.[187] Similar examples from the western coast under the Śilāhāras are also noticeable. Bhābhaṇa *śreṣṭhi* and his brother Dhanāma *śreṣṭhi* of Balipattana were holding very high and responsible positions of *mahāpradhāna* and *mahāsāndhivigrahika* under Anantadeva of the north Konkan branch.[188] Their father Durga *śreṣṭhi* too was a *mahāpradhāna*. It appears that these shipping tycoons must have misused their official position to secure from the king a charter exempting their ships from the payment of cess that may be levied for the ingress and egress of their sailors at the time of calling at the prosperous Sthānaka, Nāgapura, Śūrpāraka and Cemūlya.[189]

Closely associated with the *seṭṭis* were the brāhmaṇas who emerge as an integral component of the ruling elite. They constituted not just the most conspicuous donees but also figured prominently in vital administrative decisions. They had also developed important commercial interest apart from retaining their hold in the *agrahāras*. It is not improbable that both the *seṭṭis* and brāhmaṇas looked after the vested interests of one another. An important indicator of this role of the brāhmaṇas is the way in which the *mahājanas* (sort of an assembly of brāhmaṇas) functioned. The very name of this assembly is a pointer to the growing interests of the traditional priestly class in mercantile

activities. Mudanūr in the Shorapur taluk (Gulbarga district) of north-east Karnataka saw the rise of not only the Five Hundred *svāmīs* of the Ayyāvoḷe in the *agrahāra* setting but also became a seat of Five Hundred *mahājanas* by early twelfth century.[190] The role of the *mahājanas* in transferring cash resources of temples in their favour in Kalikaṭṭi (south Karnataka) has already been mentioned above.[191] The evidence from the Śilāhāra records is no less striking. The *mahājanas* of Brahmapurī were entrusted the responsibility of protecting all gifts mentioned in the Kolhapur plates of Gaṇḍarāditya dated ŚE 1048 (AD 1126).[192] The *mahājanas* of the *agrahāra* village Pauva were *resourceful enough to purchase* land and houses from Lakhumaṇa Ghaisāsa for donation in AD 1192.[193] *Mahājanapramukhas* figure along with the five ministers of the king as the witnessing authority of the *vyavasthā* laid down in the Bhoighar plates of Cittarāja (ŚE 946).[194] That assemblies of the ruling elites were not passive and pious spectators and had their definite vested interests is seen in the assignment of certain *ad valorem* taxes to the local assemblies of guilds by the goldsmith Nāgoja and Reva- *gāvuṇḍa*.[195] Though a donor, Reva retained the hold to allocate these taxes in consultation with the assemblies. The entire arrangement was made with the knowledge of the government.

Finally, we draw the attention to a somewhat disconcerting feature of the hold of the aforesaid ruling elite on the cash nexus. This is related to the noose spread around petty farmers, shopkeepers and artisans through various levies imposed by this elite. In recent years there has been considerable debate over the alleged "free peasantry" in the construct of Indian feudalism.[196] While the case of the immobility and subjection of peasantry is well documented, that of petty artisans has not been fully appreciated. As far as the Śilāhāras are concerned, the nature of levies imposed on petty shopkeepers, oil-men, gardeners, potters, washermen, shoemakers, cobblers, carpenters, areca-nut sellers[197] provides a fascinating clue in this direction. These people were not only burdened with cash and kind levies but they had also lost control over their persons. An inscription of 1008 refers to the gift of families of a *dārikā* [female attendant/*devadāsī*(?)] an oil-man, a gardener, a potter and a washerman to the donee.[198] We have already pointed out the paucity of specific allusions to artisanal activities. Therefore, the overall role of guilds in the economic structure, specially production, still needs to be explored more fully. A few questions requiring attention are:

(i) Was there any perceptible polarization of merchants and artisans?

(ii) How far is it possible to distinguish between the output of artisan household and mercantile enterprise?

(iii) What was the extent of the part played by crafts in the government?

(iv) What was the degree of flexibility of occupational structure and how far did it contribute to the establishment of craft monopolies?

(v) Did the perceptions of craft guilds undergo a change when they became part of administrative structure as seems to be the case in some Śilāhāra inscriptions?

(vi) What was the relationship between the monopoly of production (if any) and the monopoly of distribution?

(vii) How far did merchants under the Śilāhāras invest their money in lands or in artisanal/agricultural production?

(viii) Is the use of real money under the Śilāhāras linked with any advance in technology?

In the face of these questions it may be asked if the cash nexus on the western coast, even in its extremely limited form, was not being actually manipulated by the ruling elite in such a way as to curb the free activity of small craftsmen and artisans.[199]

To sum up, the cash nexus on the western coast under the Śilāhāras was marked by limited use of money despite the revival of trade, spurt in agricultural activities, growing tendency of urbanization and multiplication of exchange centres in different areas of northern and western India during the centuries between the ninth and the thirteenth. With an access to a long coastline the potentialities for fervent mercantile activity were immense. The perceptible emphasis on the cultivation of areca-nuts makes the case of commercial agriculture also quite viable. Yet, the types and denominations of coins remained not only extremely localized but could not penetrate deep into the economic ethos. The real money under the Śilāhāras appears only for less than 150 years from the middle of the eleventh century. The overall exchange network failed to make inroads into the feudal socio-economic and political structure. Far from relieving the pressure on peasants, craftsmen and artisans, the exchange network under the Śilāhāras seems to have become a handy tool of the ruling elite comprising influential *mahābrāhmaṇas*, *seṭṭis* and their assemblies which functioned in league with the king and his feudalized bureaucracy.

APPENDIX

Note: The inscriptions published in the *CII*, VI, have been rearranged in chronological order as follows.

The serial numbers given in the appendix and referred to in the present paper therefore do not tally with those in *CII*, VI.

S. No.	*Name of Inscription*	*King*	*Date in the Śaka Year*	*Pages in CII*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
North Konkan Branch				
1.	Kanheri Cave	Pullaśakti	765	1-3
2.	Kanheri Cave	Kapardin II	775	3-6
3.	Kanheri Cave	Kapardin II	799	6-8
4.	Prince of Wales Museum Plates	Chādvaideva	mid-tenth century AD	8-17
5.	Janjira Plates (Set I)	Aparājita	915	17-28
6.	Janjira Plates (Set II)	Aparājita	915	28-35
7.	Bhādāna Grant	Aparājita	919	36-44

1	2	3	4	5
8.	Thana Plates	Arikesarin	939	44-54
9.	Bhoighar Plates	Cittarāja	946	274-79
10.	Bhandup Plates	Cittarāja	948	54-60
11.	Dive Agar Plates	Cittarāja	949	60-64
12.	Berlin Museum Plates	Cittarāja	956	64-71
13.	Chinchani Plate	Cittarāja	956	71-75
14.	Thana Plates	Nāgārjuna	961	75- 82
15.	Thana Plates	Mummuṇirāja	970	82-98
16.	Prince of Wales Museum Plates	Mummuṇirāja	971	98-106
17.	Dive Agar Plates	Mummuṇirāja	975	107-10
18.	Ambarnath Temple	Māmvaṇirāja	982	110- 13
19.	Vihar Stone	Anantadeva I	1003	113-15
20.	Kharepatan Plates	Anantadeva I	1016	115-20
21.	Vadavali Grant	Aparāditya I	1049	120-27
22.	Cintra Stone	Anantadeva I	1059	127-30
23.	Chanje Stone	Anantadeva I	1060	130-32
24.	Panhale Plates	Vikramāditya	1061	133-42
25.	Agashi Stone	Aparāditya I	1070	279-80
26.	Ranjali Stone	Haripāladeva	10(70)	142-44
27.	Agashi Stone	Haripāladeva	1072	144-46
28.	Mahul Stone	Haripāladeva	1075	146-48
29.	British Museum Stone	Haripāladeva	1076	148-50
30.	Chiplun Stone	Mallikārjuna	1078	150-53
31.	Bassein Stone	Mallikārjuna	1083	153-56
32.	Lonad Stone	Aparāditya II	1106	156-58
33.	Thana Stone	Aparāditya II	1107	158-61
34.	Parel Stone	Aparāditya II	1108	161-63
35.	Nandui Stone	Aparāditya II	1119	280-82
36.	Bassein Stone	Anantadeva II	1120	163-65
37.	Mandavi Stone	Keśideva II	1125	165-66
38.	Akshi Stone	Keśideva II	1131	167-68
39.	Chaudharapada Stone	Keśideva II	1161	169-72
40.	Dive Agar Stone	Anantadeva III	1176	172-73
41.	Ranvad Stone	Someśvara	1181	173-75
42.	Chanje Stone	Someśvara	1182	175-77
South Konkan Branch				
43.	Paṭṭanakuḍi Plates	Avasara II(?)	910	178-83
44.	Kharepatan Plates	Raṭṭarāja	930	183-93
45 .	Balipattan Plates	Raṭṭarāja	932	193-99
Kolhapur Branch				
46.	Miraj Plates	Mārasiṃha	980	200-206
47.	Honnur Image	Ballāla	12th century AD	206-07
48.	Talalo Plates	Gaṇḍarāditya	1032	207-14
49.	Kolhapur Plates	Gaṇḍarāditya	1037	214-21
50.	Herle Stone	Gaṇḍarāditya	1040	221-24

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
51.	Kolhapur Plates	Gaṇḍarāditya	1048	224-29
52.	Kolhapur Stone	Gaṇḍarāditya	1058	229-35
53.	Kolhapur Śeṣasāyī Temple	Gaṇḍarāditya	12th century AD	235-39
54.	Jugal Fragmentary Stone	Gaṇḍarāditya	12th century AD	239-40
55.	Miraj Stone	Vijayāditya	1065-66	241-46
56.	Kolhapur Stone	Vijayāditya	1065	246-49
57.	Bāmani Stone	Vijayāditya	1073	250-53
58.	Shedabal Stone	Vijayāditya	1075	254-56
59.	Jugal Fragmentary Stone	Vijayāditya	12th century AD	256-57
60.	Khidrapur Stone	Vijayāditya	12th century AD	257-58
61.	Kolhapur Stone	Bhoja II	1104	258-63
62.	Kolhapur Stone	Bhoja II	1112-15	264-67
63.	Kaseli Grant	Bhoja II	1113	267-73
64.	Kutāpura Grant	Bhoja II	1113	282-86

REFERENCES

* For inscription numbers mentioned in the notes see Appendix.

1. *Indian-Feudalism*, 2nd edn, Delhi, 1980.
2. Cf. *EI*, XXVII, 1947-48, no. 15, p. 70.
3. These inscriptions have been edited by V.V.Mirashi in *CII*, VI, New Delhi, 1977.
4. Nos. 29 and 38. 5. No. 6. 6. Nos. 47, 52, 56 and 57.
7. 38 out of 64. These include three of the earliest inscriptions found in the Kanheri caves and dated in the years 765, 775 and 799. The branchwise break-up is—North Konkan : 25 and Kolhapur:13.
8. North Konkan:17; South Konkan:3 and Kolhapur:6.
9. No. 13. 10. Nos. 54 and 59 (Belgaum district).
11. No. 58. 12. Nos. 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 17, 25, 26, 31, 36, 37, 38 and 40.
13. Cf. K.M. Shrimali, "Early Indian Coins and Economic History:Trends and Prospects" in Devendra Handa, ed., *Ajaya Śrī:Ajay Mitra Shastri Felicitation Volume*, I, Delhi, 1989, pp. 237-51.
14. P. Bhatia, "Note on the Physical Distribution of the Indo-Sassanians, Śrī Vigra(ha), Śrī Vi and Śrī Adivarāha Coins in the Ganga Valley, *c.* AD 700-1000", *JNSI*, L, 1988, pts. I-II, 99- 108; John S. Deyell, *Living Without Silver:The Monetary History of Early Medieval North India*, Delhi, 1990, *passim*. See also, Bhaskar Chatterjee, "Gold Coinage in Early Medieval Bengal", *JNSI*, L, 1988, pts. 1-2, 109-11.
15. P. Bhatia, op. cit., p. 104, "these coins did not travel too far away from the Doab".
16. Bhaskar Chatterjee's delineation relies rather heavily on the dubious literary notices in the *Vallālacarita* and *Rāmacarita*. Do references to jewellery in gold, howsoever prolific, automatically imply the existence of gold coins? The implications of his plea for the "advanced stage of credit economy" will be discussed below (Cf. fn.159 and its text). Meanwhile, cf. our reservations about the media of exchange available in what is called mid-eastern India (including Bengal) in the contribution mentioned in note 13.
17. R.S. Sharma, "Metal Money in India (*c.* 500-1000)", Third Nathaniel Wallich Memorial Lectures delivered at the Indian Museum, Calcutta, on 28 and 29 October, 1988 (unpublished, through the courtesy of the author).
18. While Bhaskar Chatterjee, op. cit., p.111, argues for the "vastness of the army maintained by the rulers of Bengal and Bihar", it does not occur to him as to how these figures (e.g.,

Sulaiman referring to thousands of people for washing clothes of army personnel under Devapāla) would stand in relation to the total population.

19. R.S. Sharma "Metal Money in India (*c.* 500-1000)", op. cit.; *idem, Urban Decay in India (c. 300-c. 1000)* , Delhi, 1987, p. 172.
20 Collections discussed by R.S. Sharma in his Nathaniel Wallich Memorial Lectures include those of the British Museum (London), Anjaneri Institute (Nasik), State Museum of Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad), Patna Museum, Prince of Wales Museum (Bombay), Asiatic Society of Bombay, Directorate of Archaeology of the State of Maharashtra (Bombay) and Bharat Kala Bhawan (Varanasi).
21. For a survey of numismatic allusions in literature and inscriptions of early medieval north India, see Dasharatha Sharma, "Coins in the *Kharataragachchhapaṭṭāvalī*", *JNSI*, XXII, 1960, 196-201; *idem, Rajasthan Through the Ages,* I, Bikaner, 1966, pp. 497-507; *idem, Early Chauhān Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, pp. 300-306; Lallanji Gopal, "Coins in the Epigraphic and Literary Records of Northern India in the Early Medieval Period", *JNSI*, XXV, part I, 1963, 1-16; *idem, The Economic Life of Northern India*, Delhi, 1965, pp. 162-215.
22. Apart from the writings mentioned in the preceding note, the following contributions also throw light on these aspects:
R.C. Agrawala, "*Dramma* in Ancient Indian Epigraphs and Literature", *JNSI*, XVII, pt. 2, 1955, pp. 64-82; *idem*, "Rūpaka—a Coin Denomination", ibid., XIX, pt. 2, 1957, pp. 115-20; V.S. Agrawala, "Coin Names in the *Angavijjā*", ibid., XIX, pt. I, 1957, pp. 20-31; U.P. Shah, "Numismatic Data in Early Jain Literature", ibid., XIV, pt. I, 1952, pp. 107-10; D.C. Sircar, "Vimśopaka and its Quarter", ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 1964, pp. 127-30; Samaresh Bandopadhyaya, "Vimśopaka and its Relation with Dramma", ibid., XXVIII pt. I, 1966, pp. 21-24; *idem*, "Metal and Sub-division of the Vimśopaka", ibid., XXVIII, pt. 2, 1966, pp. 149-52; *idem*, "Purutha Dramma", ibid., XXX, 1968, pp. 96-101; Bhaskar Chatterjee, "Dramma in Bengal's Currency System", ibid., XIIX, 1987, pp. 90-92.
23. As an illustration, a perceptive and illuminating contribution of B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Markets and Merchants in Early Medieval Rajasthan", *Social Science Probings*, II, no. IV, December 1985, pp. 413-40 needs a special mention.
24. The Miraj Stone inscription of Vijayāditya refers to *baḷḷa*. The *Līlāvatī* takes it as a coin of three *rattis* but L.D. Barnett (*EI*, XIX, 1927-28, p. 40) and V.V. Mirashi (*CII*, VI, p. 245) take it as a measure of capacity.
25. "Coins Mentioned in the Inscriptions of the Śilāhāras", *JNSI*, XXXVI, 1974, pp. 77-82.
26. See Binda Paranjape, "A Note on Kumāragadiyānaka", *JNSI*, XVIII, pts 1 and 1, 1986, pp. 54-55.
27. *CII*, VI, pp. 1-3.
28. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 26, 33 and 34.
29. Kielhorn in *IA*, XIII, pp. 132f; *CII*, VI, pp. 1- 3.
30. *CII*, VI, pp. 3-6.
31. The reading in this case is rather clear. This is not the case in inscription no. 1.
32. He witnessed the endowment mentioned in no. 3 as well.
33. No. 3.
34. *CII*, VI, pp. 36-44.
35. Ibid., ll. 88-89.
36. Ibid., ll. 64-65.
37. We are not unaware that such an assumption, viz., the rate of interest remaining static for more than 130 years, is frought with serious implications about the cash flow.
38. No. 3.
39. No. 9. Bhoighar plates.
40. The *Lekhapaddhati* (GOS, XXI, pp. 97-128, Glossary) describes *vyawahāra* "as a tax from merchants".
41. *samastārāmāṇām phalapraviṣṭānam •Pūgiphalavṛkṣaśatam prati dramma catuṣṭayam vidhāya gumme vyavasthā vihitā*, *CII*, VI, p. 277. While the text and Mirashi's translation say "This order applies to *all* coconut, jackfruit, champak, mango and other trees, whether in orchards or in the (adjoining) forests"; there is greater rationale in Mirashi's introductory notes where he regards fruits of these trees as "untaxable". It needs to be mentioned that this part of the *vyavasthā* is immediately followed (in M.G. Dikshit's rendering there is

not even a *virāma* between these two sentences, cf. *Selected Inscriptions from Maharashtra*, p. 45, ll. 53-55) by the stipulation: "the trees of spirituous liquor (*surāmaṇḍa vṛkṣa*), whether in orchards or outside, belong solely to the government", cf. Mirashi, *CII*, VI, pp. 275, 277-78. Incidentally, M.G. Dikshit's version (op. cit.) also adds tamarind trees (*ciñcā*) to the list of "untaxable" heads.

42. *pañcapradhānānumatya mahājanapramukha (samakṣam)*. For *mahājanas* as brāhmaṇa residents of the entire village/ members of the village assembly or as an influential section of the administrative-fiscal set-up in villages see D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Delhi, 1966, p. 177 and B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India*, Calcutta, 1990, pp. 111-12.
43. No.11, ll. 27-30.
44. *CII*, VI, pp. 75-82, specially ll. 69-70.
45. Unlike most of the Ṛgvedin brāhmaṇa donees hailing from Karhāṭa, the present one came to Konkan from Hastigrāma in Madhyadeśa and was a Yajurvedin.
46. Perhaps per annum.
47. *CII*, VI, pp. 82-98.
48. Ibid., text, ll. 76-80.
49. Ibid., text, ll. 80-83.
50. Ibid., text, ll. 83-86.
51. Ibid., text, ll. 86-90.
52. Ibid., text, ll. 90-94.
53 Unlike other villages, this village was owned by one brāhmaṇa Madhupaṇḍita. Also, surprisingly in this case the geographical delimitation of the donated village is not mentioned.
54. *CII*, VI, pp. 82-98, text, ll. 95-96.
55. Ibid., p. 89, ll. 75-76.
56. Out of revenue from the produce of the village: *siddhāya ... palāṇḍa*.
57 *CII*, VI, p. 90, ll. 97-104.
58. Ibid., ll. 104-18.
59. Ibid., pp. 90-91, ll. 118-27.
60. Ibid., p. 91, ll. 127-33.
61. *Palāṇḍa* is not used in this case. Only *siddhāyātpañcāśaddrammā* are referred to in line 132.
62 Ibid., p. 91, ll. 133-40.
63. Again only *siddhāya* is used not *palāṇḍa*.
64 *CII*, VI, 91, ll. 141-46. *Palāṇḍa* not used.
65. Ibid., pp. 91-92, ll. 146-52; as in note 63.
66. Ibid., p. 92, ll. 152-56; as in note 63.
67. Ibid., ll. 156-66. Though the text refers to *three* fields spread out in two villages (ll. 165-66) there is an additional reference to a plot of land connected with the Mājhilavāvākṣetra (cf. ll. 159-61). The geographical delimitation of this plot is also specified.
68. Ibid., p. 92, ll. 168-71.
69. Ibid., p. 88, ll. 42-44.
70. No. 16.
71. *CII*, VI, 103-04, ll. 72-77.
72. No. 19.
73. No. 21, ll. 62-63.
74. No. 26, ll. 13-14.
75. No. 33.
76. No. 34.
77. No. 43.
78. Ibid., ll. 33-37.
79. Ibid., ll. 37-38.
80. Ibid., ll. 38-40.
81. No. 44.
82. *CII*, VI, p. 189, ll. 42-56.
83. Ibid., p. 189, ll. 56-57. For a recent study of the mercantile activity of the Śilāhāras see Ranabir Chakravarti, "Merchants of Konkan (*c.* AD 1000- 1500)", *IESHR*, XXIII, pt. 2, April-June 1986, pp. 207-15.
84. *CII*, VI, p. 189, ll. 58-59.
85. No.15. For details, see *supra* notes, 48-53.
86. For identification of *Kumāragadyāṇakas* as coins issued by the crown prince rather than gift collected on the birth of prince or a tax for maintenance/education of crown prince, see Binda Paranjape, "A Note on Kumāragadi-yāṇaka", *JNSI*, XLVIII, pts. 1 and 2, 1986, pp. 54-55.
87. *CII*, VI, pp. 229-35.
88. There is a conscious attempt to trace exalted genealogy of the traders of this corporation as, for instance, recording their birth in the race of Vāsudeva, Khaṇḍalī and Mūlabhadra, ibid., p. 232, l. 13. This reminds us of fabrication of glorious genealogies for early medieval kings—both in north and south India, as ideological tools of imparting legitimacy and divinity to the royal authority. Cf. Romila Thapar, "Genealogy as a Source of Social

History", in *idem, Ancient Indian Social History*; B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Origin of the Rajputs: Political, Economic and Social Processes in Early Medieval Rajasthan", *IHR*, III, 1, 1976, pp. 59-82; Kesavan Veluthat, "Royalty and Divinity: Legitimisation of Monarchical Power in South India", *PIHC*, 39th session, Hyderabad, I, 1978, pp. 241-49; *idem*, "Monarchical Power in Early Medieval South India: The Image and the Reality", paper presented at the seminar on "The State in Pre-Colonial South India", Jawaharlal Nehru University, March 1989 (mimeographed).

89. *CII*, VI, pp. 232-33, ll. 19-24. 90. Ibid., p. 232, l. 10.
91. Ibid., p. 233, ll. 26-32. 92. Ibid., l. 27. 93. No. 55.
94 *CII*, VI, p. 243, ll. 1-16. 95. Ibid., ll. 24-25. 96. Ibid., pp. 243-44, ll. 29-32.
97. Ibid., p. 244, ll. 35-36. 98. Ibid., pp. 255-56.
99. Ibid., p. 255, ll. 12-24; for details of the context, see below under *hāga*.
100. Mirashi suggests that a *hāga* was equal to 1/4 *paṇa*, *CII*, VI, 245, n. 7.
101. Ibid., pp. 243-44, ll. 30-31. 102. Ibid., p. 244, l. 32.
103. Ibid., l. 33. 104. Ibid., pp. 254-56.
105 Ibid., p. 255, ll. 22-27. Regrettably, the relevant measure for cloth is not mentioned.
106. Ibid., pp. 255-56 (translation only).
107. For contextual details, *supra*, notes 93-94. 108. *CII*, VI, p. 243, l. 25.
109. Ibid., ll. 25-26. 110. Ibid., p. 244, ll. 35-36. 111. Ibid., ll. 51-52.
112. Ibid., ll. 53-54. 113. Ibid., ll. 43-45. 114. Ibid., p. 233, l. 27.
115. Since photographs of the plates have not been published, it has not been possible to verify the text published by Mirashi (*CII*, VI, p. 285, 12th line from top), who restores it as: *pratigrāmam* (*gṛham*) *rajatanişkam*.
116. No. 58. 117. No. 42. 118. See also *supra*, notes 94-98.
119. *CII*, VI, p. 176, l. 10. 120. Ibid., p. 177, ll. 13-14. 121. No. 52, l. 28.
122. *CII*, VI, p. 235. 123. No. 32. 124. *CII*, VI, p. 157, ll. 10-14.
125. *JRAS*, 1900, p. 118. Mirashi (*CII*, VI, p. xvi; *JNSI*, XXXVI, 1974, 79) refers to a pot of coins mentioned in the *Bombay Gazetteer* (old ed., Nasik district, p. 617, n. 2) published in 1883. The hoard was supposed to contain Gadhaiya coins and Kşatrapa coins. It was speculated that the former may have been issued by Cittarāja. We would not like to take this information seriously. Incidentally, P.L. Gupta's compendium of *Coin Hoards from Maharashtra* (1970), where the oldest discovery is ascribed to 1844, does not mention this hoard, though 32/239 hoards listed therein are pre 1883.
126. Ibid., Hoard nos. 38, 161, 187, 226, 227 and 235.
127. H.D. Sankalia and M.G. Dikshit, *Excavations at Brahmapuri (Kolhapur), 1945-46*, Poona, 1952, pp. 28, 34-35, 39. B.D. Chattopadhyaya is in broad agreement with the assessment that the Kolhapur gold coins are those of the Śilāhāras. He adds that 13 gold coins of variety 'C' from the Walve hoard (South Satara district, Maharashtra) with *garuḍa* and *triśūla* may also be attributed to the Śilāhāras. He goes a step further and suggests a gold coin preserved in the British Museum with Nāgarī legend Śrī *Vī(ra)malla* or *Śrī Vī(ra)malli* may be attributed to Śilāhāra king Mallikārjuna, though he also recognizes the possibility of their being the coins of Hangal family of Kadambas. Cf. Chattopadhyaya, *Coins and Currency Systems in South India*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 48-50. For the coins of Walve hoard, cf. *JNSI*, XX, pp. 79-80.
128. This alleged affinity is particularly used to refute the stronger possibility of these coins being Rāṣṭrakūṭa coins. See also M.G. Dikshit, "Some Gold Coins of Kadamba Dynasty", *JNSI*, XI 1949, p. 88. Cf. P.L.Gupta, *Bibliography of Indian Numismatics*, part I, Varanasi, 1977, p. 203.
129. It needs to be underlined that the layer from which these so-called Śilāhāra coins have been found has also yielded coins of the Sātavāhanas (Square II) and the Bahmanis (Square I).
130. *CII*, VI, Introduction, p.vi.

131. *IAR*, 1957-58, pp. 23-24l; B.N. Chapekar, *Report on the Excavation at Ter (1958)*, Poona, 1969, pp. vi-viii. See also R.S. Sharma, *Urban Decay in India (c. 300-1000)*, pp. 81-82, Appendix 2, p. 196.
132. Chandrashekhar Gupta, "A Coin of the City State of Tagara", *JNSI*, XXXIII, part II, 1971, pp. 37-40.
133. *IAR*, 1967-68, p. 35; 1968-69, pp. 17-18.
134. V.T. Gune, *News Letter of Archives, Archaeology and Museum of the Government of Goa, Daman and Diu*, II, no. 3, pp. 64-65.
135. V.R. Mitragotri, "Harmal Hoard of Śilāhāra Silver Coins", *JNSI*, XLV, pts.1 and 2, 1983, pp. 53-54.
136 Kharepatan plates, *CII*, VI, p. 119, ll. 83-4 and p.120.
137. B.D. Chattopadhyaya cited in V.R. Mitragotri, op. cit., p. 54. See also B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Coins and Currency System in South India*, p. 48.
138 No. 15, ll. 166-71.
139. W.H. Moreland notes that during the first century of the Turkish rule (thirteenth/fourteenth centuries), when the payments of landed intermediaries were ordinarily assessed in terms of cash, there were a few cases of the revenue of a province being stated in commodities, e.g., elephants from Bengal (Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, reprint, Delhi, 1968, p. 11). It may also be recalled that as late as the sixteenth century, Sher Shah framed assessment rates on the basis of the state claiming one-third of the average produce stated in grains, with rates fixed in cash for a few crops only (ibid., pp. 82-83). Even in the heyday of the Mughal empire under Akbar, limitations of monetary transactions were apparent when we find that coins were not regarded as fixed standards of value, but rather as a form of merchandise—a merchant who offered payment in money was in fact entering on a particular kind of barter (W.H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, reprint, Delhi, 1983, pp. 59-60). Similarly, the land-revenue demands on peasants and salaries of *mansabdars* in the seventeenth century were expressed in terms of *dāms* (copper coins) which were used only as "money of account". Such calculations differed from real transactions in rupees (cf. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 239-40).
140. No. 11, ll. 29-30.
141. D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Delhi, 1966, p. 347.
142. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Markets and Merchants in Early Medieval Rajasthan", op. cit., pp. 413-40.
143. No. 15, ll. 169-70.
144. No. 55, ll. 20, 49-50.
145. Ibid., l. 44.
146. No. 13.
147. No. 57, *yoja* suffix is considered to be an indicator of affiliations with artisans' community.
148. No. 58.
149. No. 34, l. 16.
150. R.H. Britnell, "The Proliferation of Markets in England, 1200-1349", *The Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, XXXIV, 2, May 1981, pp. 209-21.
151. Ibid.
152. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Market and Merchants in Early Medieval Rajasthan," op. cit.
153. Nos. 44, 47, 48, 50, 51, and 62.
154. Nos. 5, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, 21, 24, 31, 35, 39, 44, 46, 49 and 63.
155. Nos. 6, 9, 11, 23, 24, 26, 28, 34, 36, 37, 40, 42, 45, 50, 57 and 61.
156. Nos. 4, 10, 12, 15, 21, 23, 32, 33, 41, 45, 56, 57, 61 and 62.
157. D.M. Metcalf, "A Survey of Numismatic Research into the Pennies of the First Three Edwards and their Continental Imitations", in N.J. Mayhew, ed., *Edwardian Monetary Affairs*, British Archaeological Reports, 36, Oxford, 1977, p. 7, cited in R.H. Britnell, op. cit., p. 212.
158. R.H. Britnell, op. cit., p. 221.

159 "Money and Peasant Economy", *Studies in History*, II, no. 2, July-December 1980, pp.11-20, specially Maurice Aymard's assertion that the role of money was "infinitely greater than the actual circulation of coins might suggest; even when physically absent, money dominated the core of economic activity and social relations", ibid., p. 15. The mechanism of *hundis* shows that such a system did obtain in north and western India under the Mughals.

160 For a survey of history of this tax see S.G. Ghataphanadi, "House Tax in Ancient Karnataka" in K.Veerathappa, ed., *Studies in Karnataka History and Culture—Proceedings of the 2nd and 3rd Sessions of Karnataka History Congress*, 1985, pp. 33-36. The Kolhapur stone inscription of Bhoja II (ŚE 1114) does mention two grades of houses as *uttama* and *madhyama*, *CII*, VI, pp. 264-67.

161. No. 44. 162. No. 55.

163. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Market and Merchants in Early Medieval Rajasthan", op. cit.

164. For its detailed discussion see R.S. Sharma, *Urban Decay in India*, pp. 149-51.

165. Cited in ibid., p. 151, note 62.

166. Cf. Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhān Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, pp. 300-301. Strictly speaking this is not an index of "money supply" in sheer economic terms for that is the activity of the government. This, in fact, is a case of release of accumulated money.

167. R.S. Sharma, "Usury in Early Medieval Times" in his *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*, New Delhi, 1983, pp.193-217.

168. I am grateful to my friend Karttikeya Kohli, an economist, for discussing various issues connected with this problem.

169. No. 2.

170. For some useful data on this question see the Bhinmal stone inscription of Udayasiṃhadeva of (Vikrama) S. 1306 (AD 1249), *EI*, XI, 1911-12, pp. 55-57 and the *vole* (*vyavasthā* settlement) given by the *mahājanas* to the *sthānikas* of Kalikaṭṭi in South Karnataka in the early thirteenth century (*EC*, V, Ak, no. 51). These records enable us to see the linkage between cash and non-cash resources and the transfer of cash resources. For a useful discussion of the problem see B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India*, Calcutta, 1990, pp.112-13.

171. No. 62, *CII*, VI, p. 266, ll. 13-19.

172. For details see R.S. Sharma, "Usury in Early Medieval India" in his *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*, pp. 193-217.

173. Nos. 26 and 29. 174. 113 have been mentioned by name.

175. As already mentioned, 35 are listed by name.

176. K. Indrapala, "Some Medieval Mercantile Communities of South India and Ceylon", *Journal of Tamil Studies*, II, 1970, pp. 5-6.

177. Cf. G.S. Dikshit, "Constitution of the Trade Guilds in Medieval Karnataka", *Journal of Karnataka University (Humanities)*, III, 1959, p. 53.

178. For recent studies of the Ayyāvoḷe Association see Meera Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", *Studies in History*, IV, no. 1, January-June 1982, pp. 1-26; *idem*, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, Delhi, 1988, pp. 41-98.

179. M.M. Postan and E.E. Rich, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History*, III, Cambridge, 1963, p. 10. 180. No. 7, ll. 88-89. 181. No. 43, ll. 32-37.

182. Ibid., ll. 37-38. 183. No. 29, ll. 4-6. 184 No. 52, l. 21.

185. No. 55. It is difficult to accept G.S. Dikshit's assessment that the *mahānāḍu* did not have "any specific functions" and did not form "part of the administrative machinery". Cf. his *Local Self- Government in Medieval Karnataka*, Dharwar, 1964, p. 34. For levies imposed at the Seḍaṃbāl assembly, *supra* notes 93-99.

186. No. 52.

187. See also Meera Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, pp. 89-92.

188. Kharepatan plates of ŚE 1016; *CII*, VI, pp.115-20. 189. Ibid., ll. 73-81.

190. See the inscriptions of the Cālukyas and Kalacuris of Kalyāna, nos. 520, 522, 523, 524 and 526 of *Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy*, 1960- 61, pp. 102-3.
191. *Supra*, note 170. 192. No. 51, ll. 46-47.
193. No. 62, ll. 13-19. 194. No. 9. For further discussion, *supra* notes 39- 42.
195. No. 58, ll. 12-24. The *gāvuṇḍas* were not simple 'village headmen' as is commonly believed. They represented prominent landed interests and had almost become land-based magnates. Cf. Kesavan Veluthat, "Landed Magnates as State Agents: The Gāvuḍas under the Hoyśaḷas in Karnataka", *PIHC*, 50th Session, Gorakhpur, 1989 (1990), pp. 118- 23.
196. The issue was first raised by Harbans Mukhia in "Was There Feudalism in Indian History", Presidential Address, *PIHC*, 40th Session, Waltair, 1979, pp. 229-80. An extremely convincing reply was given by R.S. Sharma, "How Feudal was Indian Feudalism" in T.J. Byres and Harbans Mukhia, eds., *Feudalism and Non-European Societies*, being the Special Issue of *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, XII, nos. II and III, January/April 1985, pp. 19-43. For a recent summing up of the debate see D.N. Jha, ed., *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, Delhi, 1987, Introduction, pp. 3-41.
197. Nos. 52, 55 and 58. 198. No. 44, ll. 58-59.
199. A recent study of craft guilds of a somewhat later period in England (*c.* 1350-1530s) shows how these guilds were deliberate and artificial constructs of the medieval urban authorities, bore little relation to economic structure and largely performed policing role as agents of civic authorities, cf. Heather Swanson, "The Illusion of Economic Structure: Craft Guilds in Late Medieval English Towns", *Past and Present*, no. 121, November 1988, pp. 29-48.

10

State Formation in Early Medieval Chamba*

D.N. JHA

In recent years the study of early state has been one of the major concerns of historians and other social scientists.[1] In the Indian context, scholarly interest in the process of early state formation has grown either as a reaction to or as an elaboration of the Marxist writings on early medieval India, notably those of R.S. Sharma who has analysed the political processes and structure of polity in early medieval India from the vantage point of feudalism[2] and has characterized the supra-local north Indian politics as feudal. Taking cue from his writings several scholars have extended the application of feudal model to the study of the various aspects of state formation in the different parts of the country.[3] In opposition to the Marxist-oriented perception of early medieval Indian state there has grown a bulk of historical literature which makes an unsubstantiated claim to provide an alternative to the feudal model.[4] Also, both Marxist and non/anti-Marxist studies have often focused attention on larger polities. The present paper, however, is a modest attempt to analyse the process of state formation in the small Himalayan kingdom of early medieval Chamba on the basis of the available epigraphic material without making any pretentious claim to put forth a grand theory for understanding the phenomenon of state formation in pre-colonial India.

Ever since 1839 when Alexander Cunningham first drew attention to the ancient remains of the hill state of Chamba in modern Himachal Pradesh, several scholars have sought to reconstruct its past. But their writings by and large deal either with the dynastic history of the region or its art and architecture, to the total exclusion of social and economic history. The present paper, based on a reappraisal of the sources, especially the inscriptions ranging in date from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries, seeks to formulate a few hypotheses relating to some aspects of the emergence of state in early medieval Chamba.

The main source for the study of the history of Chamba consists of the *Vaṃśāvalī* and inscriptions.[5] The former in its present form was composed as late as the end of the sixteenth century by Paṇḍita Ramāpati, son of Surānanadaśarmā and chief minister of King Balabhadravarman (1589-1641), though it must have drawn heavily on its earlier versions and on various traditions current at the time. It can, however, be useful to the extent it is corroborated by *Vaṃśāvalīs* of other hill states and inscriptions of which 130 are recorded in the Chamba territory.[6]

Leaving aside the two stone inscriptions at Kanhiara and Pathyar[7] (palaeographically assignable to the Maurya and the Kuṣāṇa periods respectively) in the north-east corner of Kangra district and at one time part of the Chamba State, the earliest epigraphic records from the region are the four rock inscriptions found in Panali Nala, near Gum in the Lilh pargana.[8] Written in the post-Gupta nail type character, bearing obvious Kashmir influence, these provide the earliest testimony to the penetration of brāhmaṇical ideas in the region around the early seventh century.[9] The process of their spread is further indicated by four inscriptions[10] of the early eighth century, engraved on the pedestals of the brass images of Lakṣaṇā Devī, Gaṇeśa, Nandī and Saklī Devī of which the first three are found at Brahmor, the ancient capital of the state, situated on the Budhal and the last at Chatrari, half way between Brahmor and Chamba on the junction of the Ravi, Budhal and Tundehn. Dating as they do to the time of King Meruvarman (eighth century) at whose orders the four inscribed brass images mentioned above were made and who figures prominently in the *Vaṃśāvalī* as one of the most early Brahmor rulers and who extended the boundaries of his kingdom in the upper Ravi valley, these records indicate that Brahmor and areas further down the Ravi formed the nucleus of the Chamba state in the initial phase of state formation in the region. This receives indirect corroboration from an early eighth century inscription from Gum[11] in the Lilh pargana which speaks of Aṣāḍha-deva as a vassal dependent on the lotus-like feet of Meruvarman (*pādakamalakiśalayāsṛtena aṣāḍha-devena*) and as building a temple at Śivapura dedicated to Saṇkalīśa. The epigraphs referred to above and the analysis of other kinds of evidence including the*Vaṃśāvalī* leave no doubt that the earliest manifestation of political authority in the Brahmor area around the seventh and eighth centuries was accompanied by the dispersal of brāhmaṇical ideology, and that both could be possible on account of the stimulus that came from outside, significantly from the plains as also possibly from Kashmir which had already become an important factor in contemporary political and cultural spheres.

The epigraphic records, which form the main basis of the present study, suddenly cease to be available for nearly two centuries after which a king called Sāhillavarman emerged on the scene and founded the new capital city of Chamba. Whether or not the line of Sāhillavarman was a continuation of Meruvarman's dynasty, it would appear that Brahmor area was ill-suited for the growth of a fullfledged state. It is much less fertile than all the areas of Chamba except Pangi as is çlear from the fact that as late as 1904 the total area of cultivated land in Brahmor *wazarat* was only 11,270 acres as against more than 30,000 acres in Churah and Bhattiyat *wazarats*.[12] The average rainfall in and around Brahmor is also much less compared to other parts of Chamba. Nor does the area ever seem to have had any considerable irrigation facility so that out of the total cultivated land only an area of 14 acres was irrigated as late as 1904.[13] The lack of congenial ecology for the growth of agriculture may have inhibited the process of state formation in the upper Ravi valley. No less important is the fact that the population of the area predominantly consisted, as it does even in

our times, of nomadic and pastoral elements represented mainly by the Gurjaras and the Gaddis.[14] The former formed the dominant section of the Brahmor population in the sixth to eighth centuries. The latter, after whom Brahmor is known as Gaderan according to their own tradition, are believed to have migrated from the plains around the middle of the eighth century during the reign of Ajyaravarman.[15] The Gurjaras and Gaddis together constitute a major segment of the population of Brahmor region even today and both are pastoral nomads, though the latter also practise agriculture. With the onset of winter they move to the lower altitudes of Chamba and Kangra and spend the summer months in the higher mountains. This seasonal migration of population, which has been predominantly pastoral, may have impeded the growth of a stable economic base which is an essential prerequisite for the development of a lasting state system. All this explains the fact that out of 50 epigraphs belonging to the period AD 600-1200 only seven are from Brahmor region. Not surprisingly, therefore, the centre of political authority shifted from Brahmor in the upper Ravi valley to Chamba in the lower Ravi valley during the time of Sāhillavarman who is credited, among other things, with the foundation of the new capital.

Known from the *Vaṃśāvalī* and the copperplate grants of his successors, Sāhillavarman (*c.* AD 920) is said to have subdued the lord of Trigarta (Kangra), made his influence felt in Kulūta (Kulu), vanquished the Kīra forces excited by the lord of Durgara and assisted by the Saumatikas and routed the Turuṣka forces in battle. Sāhillavarman, with the assistance of his son and successor, Yugākaravarman, was responsible for founding the new capital at Chamba and for the expansion and consolidation of the kingdom.[16] From now on for more than two centuries, except for a brief period of setback during the time of Sālavāhanavarman,[17] the Chamba kings continued to assert their suzerainty in the Chandrabhāgā and Ravi valleys so that in the second half of the eleventh century Churah was annexed to their kingdom. The last important ruler of Sāhillavarman's line was Vijayavarman who ruled in the twelfth century and who, according to the *Vaṃśāvalī*, scored victories over the Kāśmīras, Kīras and the Mudgalas. He was succeeded by as many as eight kings who do not seem to have been rulers of any consequence. The first phase of the territorial expansion of Chamba therefore comes to an end in the twelfth century.[18]

An important indication of the gradual stabilization of Chamba state during the tenth-twelfth centuries is the suppression of hill chieftains called *rāṇās* or *rājānakas* who, before the tenth century seem to have held independent sovereign sway over small areas often consisting of a few villages. The first clear epigraphic reference to a *rāṇā* (*rājānaka*) is found in an image inscription from the village Svaim (Himagiri pargana, Chamba *wazarat*), assigned palaeographically to the ninth or tenth century, which speaks of a Rāṇā Bhogata, the son of Somaṭa, born in the district of Kiṣkindha.[19] Another nearly contemporary record,[20] the Sarahan *praśasti*, also appears to be the record of a *rāṇā* called Sātyaki who married Somaprabhā of the house of Kiṣkindha. Neither Bhogata of the Svaim inscription nor Sātyaki of the Sarahan *praśasti* seems to have recognized any overlord and both may have been independent chieftains who

possibly lived before the founding of the capital of Chamba. The situation, however, seems to have changed after Sāhillavarman as is evident from an analysis of the inscriptional material. There are in all thirteen epigraphic references to *rāṇās* during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Out of these, five mention them in the category of officers which implies that they had lost their earlier political importance. Similarly out of the seven inscriptions, which are attributed to the *rāṇās*, five are clearly dated in the regnal years of the Chamba kings—a fact indicative of the curtailment of the powers of the former and their reduction to the feudatory status. Epigraphic reference to *rāṇās/rājānakas* almost ceases from the thirteenth century which implies their decline. The emergence of state in the lower Ravi valley with its seat of power at Chamba may thus be appreciated against the background of the suppression of the petty hill chieftains called *rānās*.[21]

The formation of state in the lower Ravi valley during the tenth-twelfth centuries was accompanied by efforts at its legitimization against the background of an unprecedented dispersal of Sanskritic ideas in the area. Thus, although the *Vaṃśāvalī* mentions Meruvarman as the first important king ruling from Brahmapura (Brahmor), it tells us about the origin of the royal house only after the shifting of the capital of Caṇpakā (Chamba). The ancestry of the royal family is traced to Mūṣaṇavarman whose father died as a result of an attack by the Kīras against his kingdom. His queen posthumously gave birth to a son in a cave where the king's ministers and the *guru* found him being guarded by a number of mice. The boy was therefore called Mūṣaṇavarman. He was later taken to a neighbouring kingdom of Suket where he was brought up and was given as patrimony the village of Pangi and great wealth alongwith a large army at the time of his marriage with the local princess. Eventually he was able to defeat the Kīras and win back his kingdom.[22] The origin myth, narrated as it is in the *Vaṃśāvalī* after the transfer of capital to Chamba, perhaps sought to provide a legitimacy to the new state. This is likely also because it has much in common with and seems to have drawn on the historical traditions prevalent in the plains. Thus the reference to the founder of the family as being posthumously born in a cave is also found in the origin myth of the Guhilas of Mewar whose name is said to have been derived from Goha/Guha (cave).[23] There is yet another similarity between the Chamba tradition and the Guhila story in that both seem to emphasize the role of *siddha* and Tantric cult in the early phase of state formation. The *Vaṃśāvalī* tells us that soon after Sāhillavarman's accession Brahmapura was visited by 84 *yogīs* who granted him a boon of ten sons. Carpatnātha, one of the *yogīs*, is said to have accompanied the king on his military expedition.[24] This reminds us of Bappa, the actual founder of the Guhila kingdom, who met Gorakhanātha at the most crucial point of his career and received a double-edged sword from him.[25] It appears that the Guhila tradition may have travelled up the hills with the migration of some Rajput families in the post-Gupta period,[26] and may have been used by the Chamba house for inventing its own genealogy which was essential for legitimizing its newly acquired power.

The formative stage of the Chamba state, especially after the shifting of capital from Brahmapura, coincided with the diffusion of brāhmaṇical religious systems which kings used for their legitimation. The earliest evidence of Śivaism in the region belongs to the late seventh or the early eighth century when Meruvarman, ruling from Brahmor, constructed several Śaiva images.[27] The subsequent centuries, especially after the foundation of the city of Caṇpakā as the capital, saw greater popularity of Śivaism in the region. In the tenth century a chieftain called Sātyaki constructed a Śiva temple. The copperplate grant of Yugākaravarman begins with an invocation to lord Hara or Śiva. His successor Vidagdha describes himself as *paramamāheśvara* or supreme devotee of Śiva. Somavarman, who ruled in the eleventh century, was also a great devotee of Śiva and donated lands to a Śiva temple built by the queen mother Rarḍhā.

Although Viṣṇuism was comparatively a late comer in the Chamba area, it appears to have been popular from the tenth century onwards. Sāhillavarman and his successors were staunch followers of the Śaiva cult. But they extended their patronage to Viṣṇu worship, presumably in an effort to seek validation for the newly established state. Sāhillavarman founded the temple of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa in his new capital.[28] The white marble for the image was brought from the Vindhyas. Yugākarvarman, his son and successor, made a generous donation of land to the shrine of god Narasiṃha (the man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu) which was constructed by the queen Tribhuvanarekhā. In the reign of the succeeding king, Vidagdha,[29] a Viṣṇu image of Thakkikasvāmī was installed by his feudatory named Thakkika, though he was a devout worshipper of Śiva (*paramamāheśvara*). In the eleventh century the king Somavarman, who described himself as a great devotee of both Śiva and Viṣṇu (*paramamāheśvara* and *paramavaiṣṇava*) donated land to the temples of god Hari, built by Lakṣmaṇavarman and Pāsaṭa.[30] In the following century, during the time of King Lalitavarman, his feudatory Nāgapāla set up an image of Naŕayaṇa, and one Ukukāṇa installed a Viṣṇu statuette with three faces, the side ones being those of a lion and a boar and alluding to the Narasiṃha and Varāha incarnations.[31] The image is accompanied by the figures of Viṣṇu's ten incarnations. There is thus sufficient evidence to indicate the spread of the Viṣṇu cult in Chamba during the period tenth-twelfth centuries. The kings, despite their saivite persuasion, used it as an instrument of legitimation. For Viṣṇuism, on account of its assimilative ability, was "an effective agency of social manipulation by the ruling elite".[32] It also buttressed their claim to Sūryavaṃśī lineage which was traced to Rāma, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu.[33]

The Chamba kings sought validation of their authority not only by extending patronage to the Viṣṇu worship but also by adopting the general cultural norms and life-styles of the monarchies of the plains. Already from the early centuries of the Christian era the king was often thought of as an upholder of the *varṇāśramadharma* and as protector and benefactor of the brāhmaṇas and was described as such in the epigraphic records of the Sātavāhanas. This practice continued to be reflected in inscriptions of subsequent times. Not surprisingly

the Chamba copperplates describe the kings either as devout worshippers of the deities, brāhmaṇas and spiritual preceptors (*deva-dvija-guru-pūjā*) or as protectors of the castes and the religious orders (*paripālita cāturvarṇya*).[34] Brāhmaṇas therefore were given donations of land and were perhaps encouraged to migrate to the region where they surely acted as trailblazers of brāhmaṇical culture.[35]

The Chamba administrative set-up also seems to have acquired a form similar to the governmental organizations that obtained in other parts of northern India. Three copperplate charters of the tenth and eleventh centuries mention a whole range of feudatories and officials who were informed of the donations of land recorded in those documents.[36] In all, thirty-six classes of officers are listed and most of them occur in inscriptions from different parts of the country. Some of them are found as early as the Gupta period, though most of them are referred to in the post-Gupta records. A list of officers partly identical with those found in the Chamba epigraphs is found in the Deo-Barnark pillar inscription of Jīvitagupta who ruled in the eighth century Magadha.[37]

The similarity of the lists of officials in the Pāla inscriptions and those in Chamba title-deeds is remarkable,[38] though one cannot argue that all the officers mentioned in the latter actually existed.[39] All this may be indicative of the state system being modelled on the pattern of the monarchy that flourished in other parts of north India in early medieval times. The phenomenon of state formation in Chamba may also be seen as part of the process of the diffusion of brāhmaṇical culture and Sanskritic ideas in the region.

The emergence of a relatively stable political system coincides with the beginning of the practice of making land-grants which begin to be available with the transfer of capital from Brahmapura to Caṇpakā in the tenth century. We have five copperplates from Chamba recording donations of land, two of which belong to the tenth century and three to the eleventh.[40] Another charter attributed to King Vidagdha (eleventh century) is a spurious record forged as late as the sixteenth or seventeenth century.[41] Out of the five land deeds two record gifts of land in the Brahmor region and three refer to land-grants in Chamba area. All the five are, however, issued from the town of Caṇpakā (Chamba), which indicates its greater importance in comparison to Brahmor from where no land endowment was made. These inscriptions also indicate that the area of donated land in Chamba was much more than that of the gift land in the upper Ravi valley. The Chamba copperplates of Somavarman and Āsaṭa (eleventh century) alone record the gift of 15 *bhū* of land (that is 255 acres)[42] in contrast to the donation of the total area of 4 *bhū* and 2 *māsaka*(59 acres) mentioned in the two charters from the Brahmor region.[43] It may be inferred from this that Chamba had greater potential for agricultural expansion than Brahmor—an inference further supported by the fact that the title deeds mention ten villages in the former and only four in the latter during the tenth-eleventh centuries.

Although the charters from Chamba follow generally the format of land-grant records available from other parts of the country, a close examination of their contents provides useful information bearing on the agrarian economy of the hill kingdom. Whereas there is ample epigraphic evidence of the donations

of both land and villages from the Sātavāhana period onwards, the Chamba copperplates refer only to the gift of plots of land and not of villages. In early medieval Chamba there seems to have been a general lack of village settlements surrounded by arable land as we find in most parts of northrn India, and the colonization of the hilly terrain must have been a slow process. Our records therefore refer to the gift of terraced fields and not of villages.[44] There was no abundance of plots of arable land either. This is evident from the fact that fields were known by proper names. In the Brahmor copperplate of Yugākaravarman[45] donated fields are known as Kuṭikā and Śabdabagga and a kitchen garden is given the name Yamalikā. In the charter of Vidagdha the pieces of donated land are called Serī and Lavāla. It also mentions Prāhabagga and Khanibagga as names of fields and Puṣkarī as the name of a pasture ground.[46] Two field names, Dālima and Vañjillikā, are also mentioned in a copper plate of Āsaṭa (eleventh century).[47] The custom of designating the fields by special names in Chamba region has been prevalent till our own times and is linked with the general situation of land scarcity. If there had been an abundance of cultivable land it would neither be possible nor necessary to give specific names to plots of land.

Our impression of the absence of a strong agro-economic base of the early medieval state in Chamba is strengthened by the fact that inscriptions mention only *dhānya*[48] and *ikṣu*[49] as the principal crops of the region; the two other agricultural products, *rocika* and *ciṭolā*, mentioned in the Sungal copperplate of Vidagdha, are unidentifiable.[50] Moreover, our sources do not refer to any large scale irrigation works in Chamba, though several terms indicating the different methods of irrigation occur in the epigraphs.[51] In early medieval Chamba there was neither any diversification of crops grown nor any advancement of agricultural technology. Here we do not have as much evidence of agricultural expansion as we have in most parts of the country in early medieval times.

The practice of making land-grants, however, seems to have led to a stratification in the agrarian society in Chamba just as it did elsewhere in the country because it led to an unequal distribution of land and to the growth of the class of landed intermediaries who derived their real economic strength from the perpetual nature of their landholdings. The Chamba records clearly stipulate that the owner and his successors were to enjoy the land as long as the sun and the moon last and that their rights were uncurtailable, inalienable and unopposed.[52] The perpetual nature of the religious land transfers is also evident from the imprecatory verses which occur in the concluding portion of the title-deeds. The beneficiaries could lease out their land as is clear from the title-deeds,[53] and this practice must have resulted in the economic depression of the lessees and other ordinary peasants. This is evident from the fact that the inhabitants in the donated areas were required to pay to the donee all taxes in cash and kind due to the king.[54] The transfer of the privilege of realizing taxes from the people to the beneficiaries must have undermined the position of the peasantry and sharpened the cleavage between the two. The available evidence points to the existence of yet another aspect of social stratification. The Sungal copperplate

of Vidagdha refers to the ploughmen, cowherds, maid-servants and all other people dependent on the donee (*āśritahālikagopāladāsīdāsyādi*).[55] The dependent ploughmen (*āśritahālika*) were possibly the actual cultivators attached to the soil and may be equated with serfs. While the emergence of a class of landowners, their tenants and the serfs indicates the stratification of Chamba society during the period tenth-twelfth centuries there is also considerable evidence of the growing importance of artisans in the region.[56] The process of increasing social differentiation thus coincided with the growth of a stable state system in Chamba.

There is also some indication that taxation system, an important pillar of the state, made its first appearance in Chamba after the foundation of the new capital. The Sungal copper plate inscription of Vidagdha (tenth century) mentions such revenue terms as *bhāga*, *bhoga*, *kara* and *hiraṇya*.[57] This, alongwith two other records,[58] also refers to an officer called *śaulkika* which may be indicative of the practice of levying *śulka* from the people. Although it is not our purpose to discuss the meaning and connotation of these revenue terms,[59] their mention in the records may be taken to imply that the main source of state income may have been the land revenue paid in kind or cash, customs and toll duties and the periodical imposts. But it is curious that out of the five land charters only one refers to the terms, *bhāga*, *bhoga*, *kara* and *hiraṇya*, and the word *śulka* does not find place in the list of taxes at all, its prevalence being inferred only indirectly from the record. It is quite likely, therefore, that the fiscal nomenclature, occurring as it does in a large number of earlier and contemporary north Indian epigraphs, was most probably borrowed from outside and may not have been a true index of the taxation system that may have actually existed in Chamba. In any case it is unlikely that the Chamba state thrived without a regular fiscal set-up during the period between tenth and twelfth centuries.[59]

Our analysis shows that the process of state formation in early medieval Chamba was conditioned by its ecology as is attested by the shifting of the capital from Brahmapura to Caṇpakā. It was also influenced by the developments which were in evidence outside the micro-region. For example, the initial growth of hill baronies (often consisting of not more than a few villages) controlled by *rājānakas* (*rāṇās*) and their subsequent integration with the Chamba state may be viewed as part of the general political process operating in other parts of the country, especially Kashmir and adjoining areas. The practice adopted by the Chamba kings for legitimizing their rule, as reflected in the *Vaṃśāvalī*, the religious donations of land and the patronage extended to Śivaism and Viṣṇuism, are almost identical with the methods of legitimizing royal authority prevalent in other parts of India. Similarly, the growth of taxation system and its nomenclature may have been borrowed from the plains. While all this should not amount to a denial of the internal dynamics of the Chamba society, it needs to be emphasized that the process of state formation in Chamba and other hilly areas has to be studied against the background of the interaction between the plains and the hills.

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11

Change through Continuity: Notes toward an Understanding of the Transition to Early Medieval India

B.D. CHATTOPADHYAYA

> "Omission and simplification help us to understand—but help us, in many cases, to understand the wrong thing; for our comprehension may be only of the abbreviator's neatly formulated notions, not of the vast ramifying reality from which these notions have been so arbitrarily abstracted", Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited*, Foreword, London, 1983.

Early Medieval, as an historical phase, marking it off from other historical phases such as *Ancient, Medieval*, and *Modern* may not be of very recent usage in Indian historiography;[1] what is comparatively recent is that the usage of terms like *Ancient* and *Early Medieval* as also that of *Medieval* and *Modern* as substitutes, respectively, for *Hindu, Muslim* and *British* is now questioned.[2] Obviously, raising questions cannot be an end in itself. N.R. Ray, for example, urged quite some time back[3] that the practice of using chronological terms in a descriptive sense needed to be replaced by analytical attempts to see if chronological labels can be understood in terms of attributes which can be associated with them. Indeed, there have already been a few meaningful attempts in this direction, such attempts providing the lead toward continuation of the discussion. Discussions around appropriateness, or otherwise, of chronological labels are now expected to relate to the theme of periodization, that is around the problem of historical change, whatever the scale and processes of historical change may have been, and the problem now therefore involves, given the obvious elements of continuity in Indian history, selection of variables which would purport to separate one historical phase from another. The task obviously implies abstraction and not simply putting together of empirical evidence; in other words, both the constructs of what is *early medieval* and what leads to *early medieval* are problems related to the kind of vantage point an historian wishes to take, keeping long-term Indian history in mind. The present essay represents an attempt to understand, the abstraction which the term *early medieval* in the context of Indian historiography may represent, both as a chronological phase and a signifier of processes of change corresponding to the phase. Such an attempt will of necessity initially involve a review of the current historiographic position with regard to the meaning of *early medieval* as also with how the passage to *early medieva'* has so far been viewed.

In accepting the idea of the *medieval*, or more specifically of the *early medieval* as marking a phase in the process of transition to *medieval*, we subscribe, it may be as well to underline at this stage, to one way of looking at the course of Indian history. It is that awareness of the elements of continuity notwithstanding, it represents an approach which envisages the course of this history in terms of stages of change. In other words, the use of chronological labels like *early medieval* and *medieval*, despite the overtones of European historiography which they evoke, implicitly rejects the notion of changelessness of Indian society. It is necessary to underscore this point since the notion of changelessness of Indian society, deriving essentially from particular perceptions of India's cultural characteristics and inextricably associated with the major premises of Orientalism,[4] has really not been given up. The notion persists under different camouflages and sometimes stretches itself to the point of declaring that attempts at reconstructing Indian history are essentially hopeless and futile.[5] The rejection of some of the premises of Orientalism, especially by Indian historians, and insistence on analyses of social change as well as on redefining the periodization of Indian history need to be clarified somewhat. The perception of change has neither been altogether absent even in earlier researches on historical India, nor has there been a general homogeneity of thought as to what the stages of change were, or, in fact, how change has to be viewed in the Indian context. For the present discussion, three points need to be noted. First, the nature of change which is subject of critical debate when one discusses change from *ancient* to *early medieval*, involves constructing, in clear contours, the image of what tends to be called *ancient*. Second, it also involves providing a construct of the *early medieval*. Third, it involves the methodological problem of causation for if we use a term like *early medieval* to suggest a timespan as well as an historical phase, it is fair that we also try to define it in terms of what brought it into being. The term *early medieval* has been in use in various senses as the term *ancient* has been. Taking up the three points for discussion therefore leads us initially to an exercise in historiography.

The exercise is somewhat tenuous because the nature of available historiography may not make it any longer possible to construct *ancient* to the satisfaction of everybody. So long as Indian history started with 'Aryan invasions' and suffered a major break with the coming of the Muslims, one had a simple view of the *ancient*, and despite ups and downs of its ruling dynasties and its alternating 'golden ages' and 'dark ages', *ancient* was seen to continue till the close of the twelfth century or thereabouts. This was of course not the only view; using the term *early medieval* in relation to a period which far preceded the Turkish invasions of northern India has been in vogue for some time, although the association of 'Muslim' invasions with the advent of the medieval period has remained, willynilly, the dominant textbook point of view.[6] Altogether, clarifying what we seek to understand by the use of the term *ancient* is no longer so simple. For one thing, concerns with definitions have become much more acute than before, and, secondly, in the Indian context, a tremendous spate of archaeological excavations and explorations has added significant dimensions

to how we view the ancient period of our history. Added to this is the growing awareness among many archaeologists and historians that we are required to contend with the simultaneous existence of a wide range of cultures. 'Living prehistory'[7] is still very much a live concept, and the view is quite strong, at least among some, that many meanings of the past can be successfully decoded only if live systems are simultaneously studied and analysed.[8]

History, however, has to have chronological labels, and even at the risk of making a somewhat simplistic equation, we would like to remark that what used to be perceived as *ancient* previously has, in fact, come to—and quite inadvertently at that—incorporate a series of culture-stages, not necesarily evolving unilineally. Instead of continuing to use the blanket term *ancient* for all occasions it has therefore become an urgent task to disentangle the various components of the *ancient* from each other or, in other words, to redefine *ancient*. One way of trying to do this would be to identify the core cultural traits which could constitute the required chronological construct, by viewing the transition to the *early medieval* as representing a major social change and thus identifying the phase preceding the transition as *ancient*.

One may suppose that thus viewed, it is no longer necessary to label the entire pre-medieval or pre-early-medieval Indian society as *ancient*. The Stone Ages of the sub-continent, the Harappan Civilization, the pre-Iron Age cultures of various regions and even early Iron Age Cultures (irrespective of whether some of them corresponded to a Vedic variant of culture or not),[9] need not all have to be aggregated together simply as *ancient* along with what developed later; rather, their cultural specificities may be highlighted. Perhaps, if one insists on *ancient* being a connotative term, the proto-historic cultures over a wide expanse of India through the chalcolithic and early Iron Ages may be seen to represent a movement toward a historical stage which may be viewed as *ancient*. Perhaps more appropriate is the current practice among historians in India to term this phase *early historical;* this is a term which gives us a better idea of what chronological span and what kind of society we envisage when we use it. *Early historical* has, for example, come to denote a phase which started taking a recognizable shape from the middle of the first millennium BC,[10] and when historians talk about transition from *ancient* to *early medieval* in Indian history, it is essentially the *early historical* culture-phase, which originated roughly in the middle of the first millennium BC, which becomes the intended reference point. Even if we arrive at some kind of agreement in viewing the beginning of *ancient* or *early historical* in this manner (and we are making a deliberate switch from *ancient* to *early historical* now), it does not necessarily mean that we are clear, to go by current historical writings, on either of the two counts: (i) what the major historical traits constituting the *early historical* are; (ii) and how far, chronologically, *early historical* would stretch. The arbitrariness, in the use of labels, appears evident when it can be noticed that both *early medieval* and *medieval* are used in relation to the Sultanate period of north Indian history and in relation to the Coḷa period in south India and the Cālukya period in the Deccan.[11] It seems then that the chronological labels need to be discussed afresh

by taking up current views on periodization because it is they which define, by implication, the attributes of the *early historical*, which is posited as a social formation radically opposite to what the *early medieval* represented.

Despite variations, a type of image of the *early historical* does emerge through this exercise, and though schematic, the following may be taken to represent its major attributes:[12]

Political	*Economic*	*Social*
Territotrial kingdoms ruled by *rājanyas* or kṣatriyas, finally crystallized into a highly bureaucratic; centralized state in which hierarchy of power based on landholding was absent, since its wide range of officials were all paid in cash.	Highly monetized economy, characterized by long-distance foreign trade, urbanization and urban crafts production. The rural units of production are seen to have existed in this form of village communities with communal rights in land still quite strong.	Crystallization of the *varṇa* system in which the *rājanyakṣatriyas* and the brāhmaṇas were the appropriators of the social surplus; the vaiśyas as agriculturists and traders were the main tax-payers while the śūdras provided servile labour. The existence of 'slavery' in various forms was also an attribute of the period. It is assumed that proliferation of castes was largely absent and labour represented a pre-'serfdom' phase.

The society in which the above attributes developed and operated is understood to have become pan-Indian and reached its high watermark by third-fourth century AD, and when we read about transition to medievalism in current historiography, the essential reference point seems to be what these attributes represent for it is through the transformation/inversion of these attributes that we arrive at a set of almost opposite attributes which marked the beginnings of *medievalism*. To put it in terms persistently used, the route to *medievalism*, in what is currently the dominant school of ancient Indian historiography, was through 'Indian Feudalism'. The belief in 'Indian Feudalism' as an explanatory model for the transition has become so assertive as to inspire, in a recent important empirical contribution to the theme, such a statement as " . . . the problem today is not whether India experienced a feudal development but rather what was the precise mechanism of such a development".[13] What constituted *medievalism* and what constituted 'Indian Feudalism' are understandably perceived differently by different historians; the historiographical ground has however been by now covered so well[14] that it is pointless to repeat the discussion. However, it is necessary to analyse a few sample views of the transition to the early phase of *medievalism* to understand shifts in connotations of chronological labels as well as shifts in the formulation of explanatory arguments.

To take up one type of statement on the meaning of the transition, Niharranjan Ray attempted a multi-dimensional characterization of *medievalism* in the address 'The Medieval Factor in Indian History', which he delivered at the Indian History Congress in 1967.[15] He located the beginning of the process in

the seventh century, which became more pronounced from the eighth century onward, and envisaged three sub-periods of the medieval: (i) seventh to twelfth century, (ii) twelfth to the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and (iii) first quarter of the sixteenth to the close of the eighteenth century. Ray, understandably, did not attempt to specify the major attributes of these subperiods but instead offered a broad package of characteristics, which, to him, defined Indian *medievalism*. Making pointed references to nomadic incursions into Indian society, represented by the Hūṇas and their predecessors, and taking them to offer points of effective comparison with developments in Europe, Ray listed the following as the major traits of *medievalism:*

1. All ruling dynasties became regional, and in this sense their genesis is considered comparable to the emergence of European nation states.
2. The character of economy changed from money economy to natural economy.
3. In such media of social communication as script, language and literature, there was crystallization of regional character—a process offering, again, a "striking parallel" with European developments.
4. The dominant feature characterizing religion was proliferation of sects and subsects.
5. Art activities too came to be recognizable only in terms of what may be considered as regional schools like Eastern, Orissan, Central Indian, West Indian, Central Deccanese or in terms of such labels as Pallava and Coḷa, in which also the regional context is implicit.

In trying to identify the major traits of *medievalism* and situate them close to European parallels, Ray obviously saw the transition as deriving from the *feudal* process. His explanations for the genesis of the traits of *medievalism*, and his sweeping generalizations around the *medieval* factor have given way, in more recent years to more specific concerns regarding the structure of early medieval India and to greater accent on a substantial volume of indigenous empirical material in efforts to understand the gradual transformation of early historical society. The recent writings have also largely bypassed D.D. Kosambi's idea of the dual processes operating toward the emergence of Indian feudalism. Kosambi's long-term view of what he considered to be feudalism, characterized by two-stage development, viz. *feudalism from above* and *feudalism from below*,[16] has not really had any followers, although, it needs to be stressed, the essential variables of the Indian Feudalism construct are present also in his formulation.[17]

From what we have said above, two points emerge: (i) in the dominant view in Indian historiography, *medievalism* is present in centuries preceding the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate and the early phase of *medievalism* has to be understood in terms of features of Indian Feudalism; (ii) Indian Feudalism is a recent construct and this construct (which has to be distinguished from earlier haphazard uses of the term Feudalism) imbibes elements from different strands of historical writing. However, despite inevitable shifts in explaining

the formation of the structure which the construct represents and identifying the major political, social and economic variables of the structure, certain common variables, which are in opposition to what are seen to constitute the *ancient* or *early historical* order, figure as points of consensus. The essential points may be thus highlighted, particularly because they appear as almost polar opposites of the attributes of early historical society:[18]

1. *Political decentralization:* The conventional duality of centrifugalism and centripetalism in Indian polity has been replaced by the image of a structure which provides a counterpoint to the centralized, bureaucratic state and the crystallization of which is located only in the post-Gupta period. The new state structure is characterized by decentralization and hierarchy, features suggested by the presence of a wide range of semi-autonomous rulers, *sāmantas, mahāsāmantas* and similar categories and hierarchized positioning of numerous *rājapuruṣas* employed by the royal courts.
2. *Emergence of landed intermediaries:* This is considered to be the hallmark of Indian feudal social formation and is seen to be linked both to the disintegration and decentralization of state authority and to major changes in the structure of agrarian relations. Emergence of landed intermediaries—a dominant landholding social group presumed absent in the early historical period—is causally linked to the practice of landgrants, the identifiable recipients of which in the early centuries of the Christian era, as also in later periods, were almost invariably brāhmaṇas or religious establishments. However, in the context of the post-Gupta period, 'fief-holders' and 'free-holders' are terms used in relation to recipients of such grants and to autonomous holders of land.
3. Changeover from *market* or *money economy* to *self-sufficient* villages as units of production, ruralization thus being an important dimension of the transition process. This changeover is seen as deriving from the decline of early historical urban centres and commercial network. This led to the practice of remuneration in land as a substitute for cash, to migration of different social groups to rural areas, to agrarian expansion and to the crystallization, in rural society, of *jajmānī* relationship or relationship of interdependence between patron and client. According to one formulation, 'fief-holders' and 'free-holders' in rural society emerged as agents of social change in the later phase of *early medieval* society, generating once again such features of early historical economy as trade, urbanism, money economy/market economy.[19]
4. *Subjection of peasantry:* Likened sometimes to *serfdom*, such characteristics of the subjection of peasantry as immobility, forced labour and payment of revenue at exorbitantly high rates point to the nature of stratification in post-Gupta society. The condition of the peasantry in this pattern of rural stratification was in sharp contrast to what the agrarian structure in ealry historical India represented since that structure was

dominated by free vaiśya peasants and the labour services provided by the śūdras.

5. *Proliferation of castes:* One dimension of social stratification is suggested by the proliferation of castes in post-Gupta society. Despite the presence of the idea of *Varṇasaṃkara*, which explains the tendency of castes to proliferate in terms of uneven marital relations in the pre-Gupta period,[20] the intensity of caste formation process is located only in the post-Gupta period.[21] As representing a comprehensive process of transition, proliferation of castes was not marked by the appearance of major groups like the kāyasthas alone, but by varieties of other groups as well. Further, many of the social groups, associated with what was considered to be polluting manual labour, came to constitute the degraded rank of untouchables.[22]

6. *The feudal dimension of the ideology and culture of the period:* The core of the ideology of the period is seen to be characterized by *bhakti* which was feudal in content since it accentuated the relationship of loyalty and devotion, which are believed to be hallmarks of feudal ties.[23] At the level of culture, the decline of what was urbane and cosmopolitan had its natural sequel in the degeneration of feudal courtly culture. The association of degenerate religious practices, such as Tantric practices, with princely courts, and the fact that the new agrarian structure created a leisurely class of landed magnates, provided the congenial condition for the rise of feudal social ethos and feudal cultural traits.[24]

One cannot be sure whether there would be consensus, even among those who are concerned with studying the problem of the transformation of *early historical* society, to reduce the "vast ramifying reality" of post-*early historical* society to the features outlined above. However, what we are dealing with at the moment is current historiography, and the rationale for projecting the image of the period, conceived as the *early medieval* period of Indian history in terms of these features, is that they are posited as points of sharp contrast with features of early historical society. Indeed, in the writings which are available to us on the theme of transition from the *Antiquity* to the *Middle Ages*,[25] or more specifically from the *early historical* to the *early medieval*, the construct of the transition is the crystallization of an opposition; *early medieval*, in this perspective, is seen, as it were, as a breakdown of the civilizational matrix of *early historical* India. Breakdown implies social crisis, and it is precisely in terms of a social crisis that the breakdown of the early historical social order of the early historical civilizational order has been envisaged. The historical events which signify crisis are identified *differently* by different historians, or at times, by the same historian: sometimes it is the Hūṇa invasions,[26] sometimes it is expansion of the scale of landgrants,[27] at other times, it is the decline of the early historical urban civilization which brings down the fabric of early historical social order.[28] Recent writings attempt to show that the crisis can be analyed, in concrete historical terms, from the way the Epics and the Purāṇas, and other brāhmaṇical texts as well, delineate *Kaliyuga* as marking a fall from a normative social order

which is assumed to be the existing social order.[29] *Kaliyuga*, the contemporary segment in the early Indian schema of cosmic periodization, is believed to be congruous with a segment of actual historical timespan since the brāhmaṇical texts use concrete social categories like the state, human settlements, *varṇa* and so on to highlight an upheaval which heralded a process of rupture with the past. The transition to the early medieval period is located in this social upheaval, which is perhaps why what is perceived as the phase of transition to medieval society is seen to be composed of elements which were opposites of elements constituting the early historical society.

II

A detailed critique of the viewpoint summed up above would be redundant here; while one can insist on the empirical validities of what sustained research over the years has established, it is equally possible to detect explanatory incongruities in the way the transition has been constructed.[30] Hopefully, the debate on the transition, which, as we shall see, relates to one of the most crucial phases of Indian history, will continue. After all, detailed empirical research done by scholars of a truly high level of competence over the years does present to us the image of a society which was going through change, and no serious student of Indian history today would any longer view Indian society of second-third centuries as having remained unchanged by the eighth-ninth centuries or would consider that the societies represented by these two time-segments were exactly identical. The question then really is: what made the eighth-ninth centuries, and oí course the subsequent centuries, so very different from the second-third centuries? And the answer, we feel, will essentially derive from the particular perspectives one chooses to adopt for viewing change in Indian history. To us it seems that an understanding of the making of *early medieval India* — as indeed the very rationale for the use of the label *early medieval* for a particular historical timespan — has to proceed from identifying the major historical processes in early India and examining the crystallization of these processes in their specific temporal and spatial contexts. Empirical evidence can be properly understandable only if we are able to view it through these major historical/societal processes of change; otherwise, there is the danger of isolating a set of evidence from the total societal context and of 'arbitrary abstraction'. In the context of early Indian history in particular, methodological emphasis on societal processes in their specific temporal-spatial manifestations, appears important because one often tends to depend on one set of evidence by virtually ignoring other categories with which comparisons ought to have been undertaken. A common example of this type of lapse is the historiography of the Mauryan empire. The image of this empire as representing a highly centralized and bureaucratic state apparatus operative over a largely homogeneous culture zone is constructed on the basis of certain categories of evidence; this image, with its roots in nationalist historiography which understandably hailed the discovery of the *Arthaśāstra*, tends to ignore the distinctions, in terms of their

specific cultural patterns, between Madhyadeśa of fourth-third centuries BC and large parts of the empire, such as the Deccan, where the dominant culture was still megalithic and in a pre-state stage.[31] Thus, when we talk of political fragmentation following the break-up of the Mauryan empire, we miss the major significance of the empire in the societal process. The sequels to the formation of the Mauryan empire were: (i) the reaching out, in different directions, of the cultural elements which the Mauryan state with its *core* in the Madhyadeśa represented, (ii) their interaction with local cultural matrices, and (iii) in subsequent stages, formation of local states and empires in the Deccan. Looked at from this perspective, the break-up of the Mauryan empire did not bring a societal proccess to a close; rather it needs to be underlined that, keeping specific regional/chronological dimensions in view, it accelerated societal processes of change.[32]

The major historical-societal processes in early Indian history will then have to be identified not by taking an epicentric view but by keeping the fact into consideration that historical-cultural stages have always been uneven over the subcontinent.[33] It seems to us that viewed from this perspective, it should be possible to identify at least three major processes which were operative through all phases of Indian history—and through early Indian history in particular. These processes were: (i) expansion of state society through the process of local state formation, (ii) peasantization of tribes and caste formation, (iii) cult appropriation and integration. Obviously, these processes were not unrelated to one another, and together they constitute a cultural matrix which came to acquire, over centuries, recognizability at the subcontinental level, including in areas which had initially remained peripheral.[34] Identification of the societal process and underlining them as the mechanism of societal integration do not mean taking an epicentric position. On the contrary, they point to the need to understand how historical regions emerge with distinct personalities—not by being submerged by a single, pre-determined cultural pattern but by responding to, and in turn, reshaping, with a broad range of variations, an ever-dynamic pattern whose dominant political, social, economic and cultural dimensions could be recognized at a pan-Indian level. The making of *early medieval* India, if we approach its coming into being from this perspective, may thus have to be seen in terms of the scale of some fundamental movements from within the regional and local levels and not in terms of the crisis of a pre-existent, pan-Indian social order.

III

It is necessary to elucidate the position by making reference to at least select empirical evidence which would bear upon the societal processes we have mentioned above, by relating them to the specific contexts of the formation of regional societies. Chronologically, the period between the third-sixth centuries AD.—but more particularly the period from the sixth century onward, was marked by an increasing scale of local state formation. This process is suggested

by the emergence of different categories of ruling lineages distributed over regions which geographers would like to put under different labels.[35] To illustrate this process, we shall cite examples from two time-brackets: third-sixth centuries and sixth-tenth centuries. In the Vidarbha region of northeast Maharashtra, archaeology reveals a sequence of cultures which, as in many other regions, stretch from the marginally chalcolithic through megalithic to the early historical urban phase.[36] As a region, early historical Vidarbha was a part of the major territorial kingdom of the Sātavāhanas, but the local state of Vidarbha, with an extensive agrarian base, came into existence only in the form of the Vākāṭaka lineage from the middle of the third century AD.[37] Going by the nature of the hypothesis being formulated regarding the breakdown of early historical social order, one may come across the suggestion that the agrarian kingdom of the Vākāṭakas was a consequence of the decline of the early historical urban centres of Vidarbha,[38] but even on the face of it, the connection would appear to be highly tenuous and, in any case, impossible to validate empirically. Such a connection, if proposed, would also leave unexplained how the lineages of the Ikṣvākus, the early Pallavas and the early Kadambas, to name only a few, arose in other parts of the Deccan more or less in the same period.[39] In the post-sixth century, the scale of the formation of local states and the transformation of some of them into major, regional state structures became much more historically significant. These state structures, the rise of which can be located between the seventh and tenth centuries and which can be placed in all major regions,[40] are familiar to all students of Indian history. The point of significance is not their genealogical or military history but the fact that, examined closely, they all display trends which worked toward the formation of the regional political, economic and socio-religious order and which may, hence, separate them from cases of state formation of the early historical period. To this point we shall be required to return later.

We have picked on the process of local state formation, despite the presence of large territorial states of the early historical period, as an exemplar in the study of the process of transition since, studied in the context of its local manifestation, state formation makes intelligible a wide range of relationships which discussions regarding the State from "the stratosphere of a rarified concept" rerely succeed in grasping. At one level, the state formation process between the third-fourth and the sixth-tenth centuries resolved one outstanding issue: monarchy became the norm of polity and vindicated the brāhmaṇical monarchical ideology that anarchy completely pervaded the vacuum which the absence of monarchy signified.[41] The significance of this resolution was not limited to the political sphere alone for even before the fourth century there was no opposition between heterodoxy and kingship; what it more importantly signified was the ultimate affirmation of the brāhmaṇical view of the *varṇa* order in the political context. This was the most comprehensive framework of social stratification available, and its expansion, in the form of *varṇasaṃkara*, was capable of both horizontal and vertical spread. Since the framework was pliable, it could and did leave the working out of actual social details to their temporal-

spatial contexts, with channels available for processes of social mobility, either in the form of movements within the hierarchy envisaged in the social order or through organization of protest against the ordering of the hierarchy.[42]

In addition to the dimension of ideology, to which was related the legitimation of royalty, the use of the term 'State' immediately implies (i) the existence of a resource base, capable of generating surplus, and (ii) existence of a structure of relationships of domination and subordination. Our contention would be that if one were to examine the nature of interrelatedness between the major societal processes identified above, one would be able to reach it only by understanding what was activated by the phenomenon of state formation. For example, if a recurrent motif of change in Indian society—and for a moment let us take this as an ahistorical abstraction — was transformation of tribes into peasantry, then state formation as a catalyst in the historical process can be seen to accommodate several levels in the relationship of domination and subordination and, further, to point to the dominant strand in the total structure of such relations. In other words, extension of the state in pre-state societies, in cases where state societies continued over centuries, either through conquest or through the process of the emergence of local ruling lineages, inevitably brought out a range of changes in a region or in a community hitherto without a political formation of the type of a state. A state would integrate as well as disintegrate; it would create a distinct stratum of ruling elites, and in doing so, create ruptures within communities which had so far remained more or less undifferentiated.[43] The formation of the relationships of domination and subordination thus cannot be viewed entirely as a kind of superimposition of extraneous elements on a community; stratification too is thus not simply a dichotomous relationship between such elements and a pristine community.[44] In other words, it is sharp fissions within communities and regions and the emergence of a complex of relations of domination and subordination which would characterize a regional state society, irrespective of whether the polities representing such societies remained autonomous, semi-autonomous from or became parts of large state structures.[45]

In Rajasthan — the region from which some amount of empirical material has been analyzed by us[46] — the period approximately from the seventh century onward started witnessing significant changes. The proliferation of ruling lineages, which over time came to constitute the social category called "Rajput", was initially spread over the period from the seventh to the tenth century. The process crystallizing in the formation of this social category drew in non-indigenous communities like the Hūṇas as well as indigenous lineages like the Guhilas and the Caulukyas; in some cases, integration of lineages bearing the same clan name laid the foundation of a stable state structure. This happened in the case of the Guhilas, several lineages of which were initially distributed over Gujarat and Rajasthan. By the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, the Nagda-Ahar lineage of the Guhilas, which controlled the nulcear area of Mewar, had emerged as the most important lineage, preparing a stable base for the medieval state of Mewar.[47] In different other parts of Rajasthan too landgrants as well as other

varieties of grants from the seventh-eighth centuries onward point to the emergence of agrarian bases, supported, in some areas, by well-irrigation. This was also the period when tribal and pastoral groups started getting either marginalized or figuring, at least in epigraphic records, as cultivators. One specific case was that of the Gurjaras who are mentioned as cultivators but it should, at the same time, be noted that several ruling families of western India were likely to have emerged out of the Gurjara stock.

The simultaneous operation of several processes of change in situations of regional state formation can be seen as one makes cross-regional references. The pattern was obviously not identical everywhere. For example, if one refers to Orissa of the period between the fourth century and the mid-twelfth century in terms of three sub-phases (fourth-seventh centuries, seventh-tenth centuries and tenth-mid twelfth centuries), one notices constant shifts in centres of power and formation of new lineages side by side with the existence of some stable lineages till the establishment of the major power of the Coḍa-Gangas in the eleventh century.[48] The implication of this political geography of Orissa between the fourth century and the mid-twelfth century is that the various loci of the ruling families which emerged were also, as landgrants tell us, the agrarian resource bases of such families. One can go down further south and note how formation of agrarian regions, in the context of the regional political structure, was taking place. It has been contended, it would appear quite correctly, that although the origins of the various subregions of Tamil Nadu go back to the early centuries, "their development as agrarian regions, resource bases and cultural subregions took place over several centuries (7th-13th centuries). The earlier period was that of the Pallavas and Pāṇḍyas (7th to 9th centuries) followed by the Coḷas (9th to 13th centuries), particularly the last of them .... In a sense, the macro-region evolved with the distinctive socio- political culture which developed under the Coḷas".[49] As in the case of some areas of Rajasthan, the expansion of agrarian base and rural settlement region in Tamil Nadu too was linked up with expansion of irrigation network. "There is a general correspondence between the steady increase in irrigation works and the increase in the *n*"aḍus under the Pallavas and early Coḷas".[50] In fact, one would suspect that the generalization made about Tamil Nadu would be applicable also to other parts of peninsular India, although the pace and chronology of the formation of agrarian regions in such parts may have been somewhat different.

If we are willing to accept—and this will depend on how intent we are on departing from the overwhelmingly dominant notion—that local/sub-regional or regional state formation did not necessarily derive from the fragmentation of a given state structure and that stabilization of state structure at local and regional levels implies changes of various dimensions, only then will it be possible to turn to the other major societal process that we have mentioned earlier, namely, the peasantization of tribes and their absorption into the dominant social order as caste categories. Our readiness to accept an alternative perspective may, again, help us resolve certain anomalies which exist in our understanding of the condition of the peasantry.

The anomaly can be stated in the following terms. It is often believed that the position of the vaiśya *varṇa*, traditionally associated with cattle-keeping, agriculture and commerce, declined gradually as a result of the decline of long-distance commerce, and the position of the śūdras, whose ranks swelled through assimilation of "numerous aboriginal tribes and foreign elements" improved; ... "the new śūdras do not seem to have been recruited as slaves and hired labourers like their counterparts. They pursued their old occupations and were possibly taught new methods of agriculture which gradually turned them into tax-paying peasants".[51] At the same time, it has been repeatedly stressed that the early medieval peasantry was "subject peasantry", their condition having undergone radical and adverse changes through the practice of landgrants which introduced a layer of intermediaries between the state and the peasants.[52] The formulations in fact envisage two contradictory positions: (i) the "subjection of the peasantry", their subjection having been generated by the practice of landgrants.[53] This formulation thus does not seem to relate to the vaiśya peasants of the early historical period, whose economic and social status is believed to have declined because of the decline of commerce;[54] (ii) the majority of the cultivators were by now tribes turned into tax-paying śūdra peasants, who were no longer recruited as slaves and hired labourers as their old counterparts.[55]

This anomaly can perhaps be resolved if we somehow get away from the *dharmaśāstra* category of the śūdra *varṇa* which, when related to the context of assimilated tribes and other ethnic elements, was in any case a product of the "fiction of *varṇasaṃkara*"[56] (intermixture of *varṇas*) and try to examine actual cultivating categories in different regional contexts. In fact, when we refer to the cultivating groups in the post-Gupta period, we do not refer to them simply as śūdras but either use the status in terms of which they were known or use the specific names given to them in the sources. In Bengal, for example, the evidence from the Gupta period onward refers to *kuṭumbins*, *mahattaras*, *mahāmahattaras* and to other categories who must have corresponded to different landowning groups, including brāhmaṇas.[57] Parallel references would be to the Kaivarttas who, in the context of the Pāla period, must have constituted a formidable community of cultivators. In addition to other types of evidence, the sustained, and for a period successful, peasant resistance put up by the Kaivarttas against Pāla rule will bear adequate witness to this.[58] There is occasional mention of groups like *vardhakis* (carpenters)[59] or *carmakāras* (leather workers)[60] either owning plots of land or having received land from the king to provide service to a newly established temple. Attempts at systematization are evident from the Purāṇic literature which not only relates diverse groups to the *varṇa* category but also makes distinctions between different tiers of a single *varṇa* like śūdra.[61]

The correlation between peasant economy, based on wet rice cultivation, and rural caste structure, which derived essentially from a gradual transformation of a tribal region, is more evident from the inscriptions of Assam, which can be dated between the fifth and the thirteenth centuries. Several points which emerge

from these inscriptions are worth noting. One, the language of the inscriptions, which is Sanskrit, "is interspersed with a number of Khasi, Bodo and other non-Sanskritic tribal word formations which are indicative of the substratum of the region".[62] For example, the occurrence of Bodo words used by the plains Kacharis in the inscriptions is significant since canal irrigation and other irrigational methods through which extension of cultivation took place are also associated with the Kacharis.[63] Second, the point has been correctly stressed that "the peasantry of pre-Ahom Assam is multi-ethnic in character" and that "the dominant impression is of a number of tribal groups such as the Mikirs, Khasis, Kakis and Kacharis having taken to cultivation on a permanent basis at some point in the past before the creation of a dominant class of brahmin landholders".[64] Assam inscriptions too refer to the Kaivarttas, and, in fact, one comes across at least two groups of Kaivarttas, the *Abanchi Kaivarttas* and the *Svalpadyuti Kaivarttas*.[65]

The point then is that in the context of the post-Gupta period, the use of the category śūdra is entirely insufficient to explain the composition and status of the peasantry and of agricultural labour constituting the base of an internally and highly hierarchized society, or, in other words, the problem of regional social stratification. To continue with the point which was being made above, if we turn to a region like Tamil Nadu, there would be an extensive range of continuum from such groups as the Paraiyar to the upper echelons of the dominant Veḷaḷa group.[66] In Karnataka too, epigraphs make clear distinctions with specific references to *prabhugāvuṇḍas, prajāgāvuṇḍas, bhūmiputrakas* and many other categories.[67] A detailed examination of the condition of the peasantry in the post-Gupta period is not what is intended here. What one needs to note, by making a few cross-regional references, is that the majority of regionally recognizable cultivating groups, such as the Gurjaras, Kaivarttas, Gāvuṇḍas, Reḍḍis, Kalitas,[68] " a bewildering multiplicity of which constitutes the Indian peasantry " started figuring in historical records only from the Gupta, and more perceptibly from the post-Gupta period onward. The timespan sixth-seventh centuries to twelfth- thirteenth centuries thus represented a crucial phase in the evolution of regional agrarian structures. This was, as pointed out already, the timespan significant in the history of the regional political structures as well. Second, using *Dharmaśāstra* categories to posit the decline of the vaiśya *varṇa* and the ascendancy of the śūdra (which in any case creates a curious epistomological anomaly) has little relevance for explaining post-Gupta historical developments. The new śūdras, if they represented tribal communities turned castes, could hardly be taken to illustrate the process of upward social mobility of the early historical śūdra *varṇa*.

IV

The ideological and religious dimensions of the society which clearly was going through the process of transition were, to say the least, complex, and with multiple facets and multiple levels. Indeed, if one were to consider that even

such mutually incompatible situations as ritual power generated by monopoly over the Vedas to the anti-Vedic Siddha or Somasiddhāntika protestations, with other levels in between, were all ideological manifestations which would relate to the period,[69] then it would indeed be difficult to envisage a homogeneous strand in the ideological evolution of the period in question. However, any meaningful attempt to understand what went into the making of what is perceived as the early medieval phase of Indian history must of necessity relate to these multiple dimensions. It is generally believed that *bhakti* and worship through *bhakti* of God as Lord, located in a temple, was the key ideological strand of the period. Evidence of the extensive spread of *bhakti* is certainly available in south India, in the forms of devotional hymns of the Vaiṣṇava Alvārs and Śaiva Nāyanārs and records of their extensive itineraries at the proliferating temple centres.[70] In south India, the term for the temple (*Kovil*) was the same as that for the king's residence. God was the Lord, and understandably the religious ideology of relationship between God and his devotee is seen as a parallel in an all-pervasive feudal ideology. Similarly, the pervasive character of Tantra and penetration by Tantra into all religious systems and practices are again seen as proceeding from and contributing to the degeneration into which Indian feudal society had sunk.[71] It is not possible to examine the voluminous writings on these aspects for our present task nor even to attempt a synthesis of views. We can at the most turn now to last major historical/societal process, i.e., appropriation and integration of cults and consider the operation, briefly, of this process to try and understand how it could relate to the problem of transition. It must be made clear however that cult assimilation does not necessarily imply harmonious syncretism but would nevertheless imply the formation of a structure which combines heterogeneous beliefs and rituals into a whole, while making and transforming specific elements as dominant.[72] In many significant ways the crystallization of a major cult illustrates the ideological dimensions of the phase of Indian history that we are discussing. First, the fact that the brāhmaṇas came to control the major cults and cult centres was the mechanism which transformed the character of earlier "local and tribal cults". It has been aptly remarked : "This new Hindu cult comprised, on the one hand, a *regular* sequence of daily rites, and was directed, on the other hand, to a permanently "present" god who was worshipped either in the form of an *anthropomorphic* divine idol or as a Śaivite *liṅgam*. This god who was always present and visible, required also regular offerings. In contrast, the local tribal deities manifested themselves just now and then in their non-iconic symbols or in a priestly medium and received offerings only on these definite occasions. This comparison between the Hindu temple cults and the cults of the autochthonous dieties ... might certainly have induced the people to draw comparisons between the status of their earlier tribal chiefs and that of a new Hindu *rājā*. In the basically egalitarian tribal societies of India the chiefs could assume a more elevated position only temporarily and in certain functions (e.g., while waging war). Only in this functional position could they expect some regular presentations and services from people outside their own clan (villages?) The Hindu *rājā* claimed an altogether different position. In the brāhmaṇical theory of society he occupied

an elevated rank which towered continuously above that of his former tribal brethren.... In this new 'representation' he demanded regular tributes — as the ever present 'new' Hindu god in the temple nearby demanded worship continuously".[73]

The symbiosis which developed between royal power and the perception of divinity as well as the nexus involving different social groups, which would operate around a major cult centre, are excellently illustrated by the detailed empirical work which has been done on the cult of Puruṣottama-Jagannātha at Puri in Orissa.[74] Another dimension of the historical process, perhaps territorially more pervasive during the period, was the spread of Śakti, signifying coming into the fore of an hitherto dormant religious force. For the purpose of demonstrating further how understanding of the regional context, as an arena for the interplay of societal processes, is important, we shall refer briefly to the phenomenon of the emergence of Śakti, principally by considering how this phenomenon has been viewed in different types of secondary publications.

Dwelling on the impact of Tāntrism, including Tāntric Śāktism, B.N.S. Yadava, who has done extensive work advocating the feudal character of early medieval India, writes: " The *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* clearly reveals that Tāntric Buddhism, Tāntric Śaivism and Tāntric Śāktism had made the position of *varṇāśramadharma* critical in Bengal and the adjoining regions".[75] Even without going into the question, at the moment, as to which specific period is being talked about, what really strikes one as significant in the statement is the assumption that the position of *varṇāśramadharma* was at all likely to be 'critical' in 'Bengal and the adjoining areas'. This assumption would proceed from what we would call an 'epicentric, Dharmaśāstric' view of Indian society and would see deviation from Dharmaśāstric schema as social aberration and not as a concrete regional reality. In other words, instead of assuming that Tāntric Śāktism made the position of *varṇāśramadharma* critical in eastern India, a more contingent query would have been to understand the reason for the reappearance and pervasiveness of Śakti in eastern India. Trying to understand the reappearance of Śakti or the Goddess on the Indian religious scene, Daniel Ingalls notes, and here we quote at some length, "what is strange about [the] Indian record is not so much the replacement of female by male hierophanies, a phenomenon which has occurred over most of the civilized world, as the fact that in India the goddess reappears . . . why should the Indian record have dif fered? To such large questions there are no certain answers.... I suspect that within India's diversified culture the worship of the Goddess never ceased. The two thousand year silence of the record may be explained by the fact that all our texts from that period are either in Sanskrit or closely related languages. Our earliest hymns to the Goddess, according to this view, are the continuation of an old religion, not an innovation. These first appear at the conjunction of two historical processes. On the one hand, Sanskrit by the third century had become the nearly universal language of letters in India. On the other hand, the pre-Aryan worship of the Indians had spread by that time very widely among the Aryans. From the third or fourth century, at any rate, the

religion of the Goddess becomes as much part of the Hindu written record as the religion of God".[76] Once this conjunction, which does not necessarily have to be expressed in terms of Aryan and non-Aryan categories, takes place, the regional elements begin to take shape through local assimilation as well as through adoption of trans-regional idioms. On the eastern Indian regional Mother Goddess cult, the central theme of the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, B.K. Kakati makes the following generalization: "Once her existence was recognised and her worship formulated, all local and independent deities began to be identified with her as her local manifestations. . . . The process of assimilation went on until in the Devī-Bhāgavata it came to be declared that all village goddesses should be regarded as partial manifestations of the goddess.... Thus the concept of the Mother Goddess assumed a cosmic proportion and all unconnected local numina were affiliated to her".[77] This seems to be substantially the opinion of K.R. Van Kooij too, when he refers to the division, or rather multiple manifestations of one goddess as five separate goddesses Kāmākhyā, Mahotsahā, Tripurā, Kāmeśvarī and Śāradā and to the mode of worship adapted to each particular goddess, who has her own magic formula (*mantra*) and of geometrical figure (*yantra*) her own iconography and secondary deities such as Śaktis, *yoginīs*, door-keepers, etc. The "common ritual covers by far the greater part of the fragment on devī-worship" in the text of the *Kālikā-Purāṇa* and "this fact is ... a clear indication of the author's concern to have the deities of *his country* propitiated by a cult form closely corresponding to the ones usual in other parts of India of his time, and to draw in this way the borderland of Kāmarūpa in the fold of Hinduism".[78] The merger of diverse elements in the formation of a cult in Purāṇic Hinduism was nothing new. The composition of major divinities like Śiva, Viṣṇu and Umā derived from the same process. What becomes significant in the context of the shaping up of regional society and culture is when we come across recorded references, for the first time and more or less within the same time-frame, to local and peripheral deities like *Araṇyavāsinī*, *Bahughṛṇādevī* and *Vaṭayakṣiṇīdevī* in Rajasthan,[79] to *Virajā* in Orissa[80] and Kāmākhyā in Assam,[81] to cite a few cases. Juxtaposed with evidence of other kinds, they too become indicators of an overall process of change in these regions. They do not all develop into major cults but some do and function toward the integration of other local cults and become one of the recognizable symbols of the region. The religious and ideological expressions of a region, in varied forms, thus become enmeshed in the web of its polity, economy and society, an interrelated vehicle of its expression being language.[82]

V

The argument that we have been trying to develop, starting with a statement on historiography, may now be rounded off. From the discussion made above we would like to underline two points in particular. First, although an overview of Indian society, say of the period between the sixth-seventh and the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, would show it to be vastly different from Indian society of the

early historical period (and the difference would be indicative of the pace of genuine social change), the change does not necessarily have to be envisaged in terms of collapse of the early historical social order. In trying to decipher the dominant pattern, from among apparently irreconciliable sets of evidence (alleged 'urban decay'[83] and large scale formation of states, for example), the most dominant pattern has seemed recognizable to us in the form of the shaping up of regional societies, and the period indicated above was most crucial in so far as the majority of the territorial segments of the Indian subcontinent were concerned. What we have called the shaping up of regional societies was essentially a movement from within, following from the operation of several major historical/societal processes in regional contexts, and this would explain the relative long range stability of regional social structures and identities. Second, in the operation of the major historical/societal processes in regional contexts, the crucial agency of change was the phenomenon of state formation at diverse territorial levels, from local through supra-local to regional, at times expanding into supra-regional. It needs to be reiterated that the process of state formation was not a unique characteristic only of the timespan we are discussing, but the relationship between the process and region formation, considered from a pan- Indian perspective, was perhaps the closest in this period. Admittedly, in Indian history, crystallization of regions was, like formation of states, a continuing process, and the period under discussion marked in a perceptible way the coming together of ingredients which go into the making of regions. State formation was a crucial agent of change in this respect in the sense that it brought a measure of cohesion among local elements of culture by providing them a focus and at the same time mediated in the assimilation of ideas, symbols and rituals which had much wider territorial spread and acceptability. Common modes of royal legitimation and interrelated phenomena such as the practice of landgrants, creation of *agrahāras*, emergence of major cult centres and temple complexes, social stratification subscribing to the *varṇa* order (even when the order in the strict sense of the term was absent) were all manifestations of how local level states mediated in the absorption of ideas and practices which themselves had been taking shape as a wider temporal and ideological process. The taking root of these ideas and practices was not a simple fact of diffusion from some elusive centre but was indicative essentially of where and in what form state society was taking shape.

This perspective leaves us with a few final points to consider. If the transformation of early historical society took the form of the gradual shaping up of regional societies and if this transformation is seen as having essentially derived from the major ingredients of early historical society, then how do we respond to the schema of periodization which envisages an *early medieval* phase in the Indian context as also to the notion of *Indian Feudal* society as characterizing that phase? Since the main concerns of the present exercise have been with historiography and with delineating the direction which the transformation of early historical society took, we consider these problems somewhat marginal to this exercise; however, a brief response will be in order keeping in view the

issues that we have raised. Even in stereotypes of changelessness of pre-modern Indian society, such markers of periodization as Hindu, Muslim and British, or Ancient, Medieval and Modern have been in use for long, and despite the possibility of the existence of sharply different notions of social change, markers differentiating broad historical phases need to continue in Indian history. Our perception of how the nature of early historical society changed may differ from the currently dominant perceptions, but continuing with the term *early medieval*, rather than using such terms as late Hindu or late classical [84] has the advantage that it goes beyond the narrowly political and cultural dimensions of history and, further, it clearly projects continuities in the operation of major societal processes well into later phases of Indian history. As we have argued before, the major thrust in the process of region formation may be located five-six centuries preceding the establishment of Turkish rule; however, it should be reiterated that the process had neither its beginning nor its end during these centuries.

Whether this *early medieval* society was *feudal* is an altogether different issue. Even those who believe in the exclusivity of feudalism as a typical European social formation do make exceptions by relating it to other societies.[85] So the issue whether Indian history is entitled to its *Feudal* phase or not can hardly ever be considered as closed. The point we have tried to make is that the historiography of transition to what is considered the *feudal* phase has been ever-shifting and essentially dependent on directions of European historiography[86] and, therefore, suffer from internal inconsistencies. Unless this historiography reconciles itself to certain empirically- validated major societal processes in Indian history, the current of *Indian Feudalism* will continue to suffer from its Eurocentric orientation[86] and from a persistent refusal to consider any other alternative mode of social change.

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1. For example, the practice, now given up, of calling one of its sections 'Early Medieval' was followed in the Indian History Congress; see *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 13th session (Nagpur, 1950); 14th session (Jaipur, 1951).
2. For relevant discussions see Romila Thapar, "Interpretations of Ancient Indian History" in *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 1-25 and R.S. Sharma, "Problem of Transition from Ancient to Medieval in Indian History", *IHR*, I, no. 1, 1974, pp. 1-9. For an interesting analysis of how indigenous notions of historical time were gradually overcome by notions of Hindu and Muslim regions see Partha Chattopadhyaya, 'Itihāser Uttarādhikār' (in Bengali), *Bāromās*, April, 1991, pp. 2-24(3).
3. N.R. Ray, "The Medieval Factor in Indian History", General President's Address, *PIHC*, 29th session, Patiala, 1967, pp. 1-29.
4. For a recent discussion of the major premises of orientalism in the context of Indian history and a critique, see Ronald Inden, *Imagining India*, Cambridge, 1990, *passim*.
5. Note for example the following comment of Madeleine Biardeau; "... in spite of a sizeable collection of inscriptions on stones or on copperplates, which have by no means all been studied or even published, this evidene scarcely enables us to reconstruct what *one would call a history*.... Kingdoms, great and small, long-lasting or ephemeral, even empires, succeeded one another, but brahmanic India continued to adhere to its own norms; *its thinkers and authors-all Brahmans* have given her a *fundamentally timeless image*.... This

amounts to saying that change, when it does appear, is only *superficial and always refers back to a normative foundation*.... There is simply a change of scale when dealing with India, because *one cannot 'periodize'* its history as one does for other areas, or divide it into territories as restricted as those of European countries", (All emphasis added) *Hinduism: The Anthropology of a Civilization*, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 1-3. This rather long quote from Biardeau's introduction was necessary because as a reincarnation of 'Orientalist' assumptions regarding India it gives lie to the assertion that such biases as are represented by 'Orientalist assumptions' are 'now less prominent than their converse—the biases of Indian nationalist history', Brendom O'Leary, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Oriental Despotism, Historical Materialism and Indian History*, Oxford-Cambridge, Mass., 1989, p. 268.

6. The equation that the establishment of Muslim rule coincides with the beginning of a new era in Indian history, which as a sequel to *Ancient*, has to be considered as *Medieval*, is quite strongly entrenched in Indian historiography. For example, even though R.C. Majumdar appears to deviate from the 'normal convention of historians of India' by considering the timespan 1000-1300 as part of Hindu (and by implication *Ancient*), in his reckoning the establishment of "the first all-India Muslim empire on the ruins of the Hindu kingdoms" did "usher in a new era in Indian history in which the Muslims played the dominant role for more than four hundred years", R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The Struggle for Empire* (vol. 5, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*), Bombay, 1957, p. xlvii.
7. The expression 'Living Prehistory' was used by D.D. Kosambi in his article titled 'Living Prehistory in India'. For reference see R.S. Sharma and V. Jha, ed., *Indian Society: Historical Probings* (In Memory of D.D. Kosambi), second edition, New Delhi, 1977, p. 15, entry no. 125.
8. That what is visible in records from the past needs to be analysed in the light of contemporary realities was stressed by D.D. Kosambi, repeatedly. Kosambi's insistence on 'combined method' is well-known; we cannot resist the temptation of giving an excerpt from a personal letter (dated 8 February, 1964) in which too Kosambi underlines the need to be aware of the realities which surround us: "I have an article in the Times of India annual, due out in six months or so, on Krishna.... You will see what Marxism can do, or can't do, when backed by field work. I should not have understood many elements of the Krishna legend without going to talk with the peasantry, and without my own boyhood in the village". Basically, the same idea, so pressed somewhat strongly, is present in Obeyesekere's skepticism "of the conventional 'empiricist' historiography popular among the very best south Asian scholars": "A historiography that relies exclusively on well-documented and incontrovertible historical evidence, such as evidence from inscriptions, must surely be wrong since it assumes that the recorded data must be the significant data shaping history and controlling the formation and transformation of the institutions of a people. A more imaginative interpretation using a broad variety of sources—from myth, ritual, and popular literature — would correct this narrow perspective", Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Cult of the Goddess Pattini*, first Indian edition, Delhi, 1987, p. 605.
9. R.S. Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1983, chs. 4 and 5.
10. For the significance of this period in Indian history and for discussion of such new trends as emergence of territorial states, urbanization, rise of heterodox ideas, etc. see R.S. Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, chs. 6 and 7; R. Thapar, *From Lineage to State* (*Social Formations in the Mid-First Millennium BC in the Ganga Valley*), Bombay, 1984. The middle of the first millennium BC is taken as a chronological reference point in comparison with other civilizations, as the "axial age" of Indian history; H. Kulke, 'The Historical Background of India's Axial Age', in S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *The Origins and Diversities of Axial Age Civilizations*, New York, 1986, pp. 374-92.
11. Cf. the chronological focus of among others, the following works:Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Delhi, 1980; G.S. Dikshit, *Local Self-Government in Medieval Karnataka*, Dharwar, 1964; Om Prakash Prasad, *Decay and Revival of*

Urban Centres in Medieval South India, c. A.D. 600-1200, Patna, 1989. In fact, David Ludden seems to talk about the 'last century of the medieval period' in the context of Coḷa-Pāṇḍya rule in south India but it is not clear which century he is exactly referring to: David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, first Indian reprint, Delhi, 1989, p. 205. By contrast, the time span 500-1200 is taken to represent 'early medieval' in R.S. Sharma, *Social Changes in Early Medieval India* (*c.* AD *500-1200*), The First Devraj Chanana Memorial Lecture, Delhi, 1969.

12. This statement is largely based on the substantial research output of Professor R.S. Sharma, among which the following may be cited as the sources of this abstraction: *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*; *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*, New Delhi, 1983, chs. 2, 9, 10; *Urban Decay in India (c. 300-c. 1000)*, New Delhi, 1987; "Problem of Transition from Ancient to Medieval in Indian History", op. cit.; "Problem of Peasant protest in Early Medieval India", *Social Scientist*, vol. 16, no. 9, 1988, pp. 3-16; *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*, third revised edition, Delhi, 1991, chs. 23 and 24.
13. R.N. Nandi, "Growth of Rural Economy in Early Feudal India", Presidential Address, Ancient India Section, Indian History Congress, 45th session, Annamalainagar, 1984.
14. See in particular H. Mukhia, "Was there Feudalism in Indian History?" *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. VIII, no. 3, 1981, pp. 273-310; *idem*, "Peasant Production and Medieval Indian Society", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, XII, nos. 2-3, 1985, pp. 228-50; D.N. Jha, "Early Indian Feudalism: A Historiographical Critique", Presidential Address, Ancient India Section, Indian History Congress, 40th session, Waltair, 1979; *idem*, 'Editor's Introduction' in D.N. Jha, ed. *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, Delhi, 1987; B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Political Processes and Structure of Policy in Early Medieval India: Problems of Perspective", Presidential Address, Ancient India Section, Indian History Congress, 44th session, Burdwan, 1983; *idem*, "State and Economy in North India: 4th century to 12th century" (forthcoming); also, B.O'Leary, op. cit.
15. N.R. Ray, op. cit.
16. D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956, chs. 9 and 10.
17. For example, Kosambi too considered decline of money economy, rise of village self-sufficiency, growth in the rank of 'fief'-holding *sāmantas*, all hallmarks of Indian Feudalism, and these features seem to be common to most constructs of Indian Feudalism so far.
18. Detailed bibliographical references from which these features are abstracted will be found in B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "State and Economy in North India : 4th century to 12th century" (forthcoming).
19. See R.N. Nandi, "Growth of Rural Economy in Early Feudal India", op. cit.
20. For the concept of *varṇasaṃkara* going back to when the Sūtras were compiled see V. Jha, "Varṇasaṃkara in the Dharmasūtras: Theory and Practice", *JESHO*, XIII, pt. 3, 1970, pp. 273-88.
21. R.S. Sharma, *Social Changes in Early Medieval India* (*circa* A.D. *500-1200*).
22. For the kāyasthas see Chitrarekha Gupta, "The Writers' class of ancient India — a case study in Social Mobility", *IESHR*, XX, no. 2, 1983, pp. 191-204.
23. See the section titled Feudal Ideology in D.N. Jha, ed., *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, Delhi, 1987, pp. 311-401.
24. See in particular, Devangana Desai, "Art under Feudalism in India (*c.* A.D. 500-1300)", reprinted in D.N. Jha, ed., *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, pp. 391-401; also *idem*, "Social Dimensions of Art in Early India", Presidential Address, Section I, Ancient India, Indian History Congress, 50th session, Gorakhpur, 1989.
25. The terminology is that of B.N.S. Yadava, "The Accounts of the Kali Age and the Social Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages", *IHR*, vol. V, nos. 1-2, 1979, pp. 31-64.
26. N.R. Ray, op. cit. See also B.N.S. Yadava, *Society and Culture in Northern India in the Twelfth Century*, Allahabad, 1973, pp. 137 ff.

27. The genesis of *Indian Feudalism*, through which transition to early medieval India crystallized, was persistently traced by R.S. Sharma to the practice of landgrants with administrative rights: R.S. Sharma, "Origins of Feudalism in India (*c.* A.D. 400-650)", *JESHO*, I, no. 3, 1958, pp. 298- 328; *idem*, *Indian Feudalism: c. 300-1200*, Calcutta, 1965.
28. The point is particularly stressed in R.N. Nandi, op. cit. In providing an explanation for the genesis of feudalism in India, R.S. Sharma too has shifted the emphasis from the practice of landgrants on to 'urban decay', which according to him, was the social crisis equivalent to feudal decline, *Urban Decay in India*, New Delhi, 1987, *passim*.
29. For details of how *Kaliyuga*, which essentially signifies a period of deviation from ideal brāhmaṇical society, is perceived as corresponding to actual historial trends from a particular period onward see R.S. Sharma, "The Kali Age: A Period of Social Crisis", in S.N. Mukherjee, ed., *India: History and Thought* (Essays in Honour of A.L. Basham), Calcutta, 1982, pp. 186-203; B.N.S. Yadava, "The Accounts of the Kali Age and the Social Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages", op. cit.
30. See B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "State and Economy in North India: 4th to 12th century" (forthcoming).
31. The cultural variations within the Mauryan empire and their implications for the overall structure of the Mauryan state, reconstruction of which still leans heavily on the *Arthaśāstra* evidence, have not been adequately underlined so far. For continuing characterization of Mauryan state as centralized, implying the existence of a uniform pattern of administration throughout the empire reaching down to all its units, see R.S. Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*, third revised edition, Delhi, 1991, ch. 23; Appendix to ch. 23 and ch. 24. For some recent relevant discussions see G.M. Bongard-Levin, *Mauryan India*, New Delhi, 1985, ch. IV; Romila Thapar, "The State as Empire" in H.J.M. Claessen and Peter Skalnik, ed. *The Study of the State* (The Hague, 1981), pp. 409-426; *idem*, *The Mauryas Revisited* (S.G. Deuskar Lectures on Indian History, 1984), Calcutta, 1987, pp. 1-31; G. Fussman, "Central and Provincial Administration in Ancient India: The Problem of the Mauryan Empire", *IHR*, XIV, nos. 1-2, 1987-88, pp. 43- 72.
32. For relevant discussions relating to Kaliṅga and the Deccan see S. Seneviratne, "Kaliṅga and Andhra: The Process of Secondary State Formation in Early India", *IHR*, VIII, nos. 1-2, 1980-81, pp. 54-69; also B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Transition to the early historical phase in the Deccan: a Note", in B.M. Pande and B.D. Chattopadhyaya, ed., *Archaeology and History: Essays in Memory of Sri A. Ghosh*, vol. II, Delhi, 1987, pp. 727-32.
33. For a statement of how geographers view hierarchy of regions and how such perceptions can relate fruitfully to the study of early Indian culture patterns, not in isolation but in their interrelatedness, see B. Subbarao, *The Personality of India*, second edition, Baroda, 1958, chs. I and II. Cf. also the relevant remarks by the Allchins: "one of the distinctive features of South Asian culture in historic and recent times is the way in which it has encapsulated communities at many different cultural and technological levels, allowing them, to a large extent, to retain their identity and establish intercommunity relationships". And further, "we must recall that in the Indian subcontinent distinct, self-contained social groups, at different levels of cultural and technological development, survived right into this century. They include hunting and collecting tribes, pastoral nomads, shifting cultivators, traditional settled agriculturists, modern 'developed' agriculturists, and several levels of urban industrial society, all co-existing and economically interdependent. This provides us with a basic model for past developments", Bridget and Raymond Allchin, *The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan*, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 11, 62.
34. This point was made earlier in B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India: Problems of Perspective", op. cit., pp. 10-11.
35. See note. 33. The notion of regions starting from what are considered to be 'perennially nuclear' to others down the scale is present in O.H. Spate and A.T.A. Learmonth, *India and Pakistan* (*Land, People and Economy*), New Delhi, 1984, part 2. Familiarity with the notion of regions has proved to be of great use in understanding the different chronology

and scale of local-level state formation. This represents a distinct advance from the position.

36. For a brief statement on the sequence of archaeological cultures in Vidarbha, dating back, in limited finds, to 'aceramic microlithic' through chalcolithic to early historic cultures see Amarendra Nath, "Archaeology of the Wardha Wainganga Divide", *Purātattva* (Bulletin of the Indian Archaeological Society), no. 20, 1989-90, pp. 93-98.

    For a synthesis of data on the Megalithic cultures of the region see K.K. Singh, "Study of Some Aspects of the Megalithic Culture of Vidarbha", unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1986.

37. For a recent study of the agrarian base of the Vākāṭaka kingdom, based on the study of its landgrants, see K.M. Shrimali, *Agrarian Structure in Central India and the Northern Deccan (A Study in Vākāṭaka Inscriptions)*, New Delhi, 1987.

38. For a brief resume of the urban settlements of Vidarbha such as Pauni, Paunar, Kauṇṇyapura, etc. and the extent of their chronological span see R.S. Sharma, *Urban Decay in India*, pp. 74-78.

39. For these post-Sātavāhana local ruling families emerging in different parts of the Deccan and adjoining regions see R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The Age of Imperial Unity*, vol. 2, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, 3rd impression, Bombay, 1960, chs 14.

40. Since the primary concerns of the historians of early India have been reconstruction of genealogies and chronologies of ruling families and of making statements on dynastic achievements, the crucial dimensions which have generally been overlooked are: (i) how the emergence of ruling lineages in different areas bear upon the problem of local-level state formation and of regional political structure; (ii) how the phenomenon relates to local-level stratification and the crystallization of the agrarian order and so on. For an idea of the scale and nature of the emergence of local ruling lineages in two phases mentioned in the text see R.S. Sharma, *Urban Decay in India*; J.G. de Casparis, "Inscriptions and South Asian dynastic tradition", in R.J. Moore, ed., *Tradition and Politics in South Asia* (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 103-27; B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India", op. cit.

41. For theoretical correlation between absence of the monarch and anarchy, particularly in brāhmanical ideology, see Romila Thapar, *From Lineage to State: Social Formations in the Mid-First Millennium BC in the Ganga Valley*, p. 118; *idem*, *Exile and the Kingdom: Some Thoughts on the Rāmāyaṇa*, Bangalore, 1978, pp. 10, 28.

42. The mobility took the form of segmentation and stratification within a community, with a segment of it emerging as an elite group, mostly by acquiring political power and an economic base. See B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Origin of the Rajputs: The Political, Economic and Social Processes in Early Medieval Rajasthan", *IHR*, III, no. 1 (1976), pp. 64-65; S. Jaiswal, "Studies in Early Indian Social History: Trends and Possibilities", *IHR*, VI, nos. 1-2, 1979-80, pp. 1-63. There is enough evidence also to show that protest against the ordering of hierarchy as envisaged in the *varṇa* ideology giving predominance to the brāhmaṇas was quite common. Apart from the fact that there emerged dissenting groups such as the Siddhas who rejected *varṇa* altogether (see notes 67, 68), protest could also take the form of individual families wielding considerable political power associating themselves with the śūdra *varṇa* and claiming it to be purer than other *varṇas*. See S. Jaiswal, "Varṇa Ideology and Social Change", *Social Scientist*, vol. 19, nos. 3-4, 1991, p. 47. The genesis of such early medieval ideas as Vīraśaivism which acquired massive social following in the Deccan was protest against *varṇa* hierarchy and against ideological and economic dominance of the brāhmaṇas in society. See R.N. Nandi, "Origin of the Viraśaiva Movement", *IHR*, II, no. 1, 1975, pp. 32-46.

43. The volume of literature on early state formation is enormous but the relevance of much of it for analysing evidence from societies in which states had been in existence for long is somewhat limited. However, the following major publications project varied viewpoints on what the emergence of state in early societies implied: H.J.M. Claessen and Peter Skalnik, ed., *The Early State*, Berlin, 1978; *idem*, *The Study of the State*, Berlin, 1981;

Morton Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, New York, 1967; R. Cohen and E.R. Service, *Origins of the State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution*, Philadelphia, 1978; H.J.M. Claessen and P.Van de Velde, ed., *Early State Dynamics*, Leiden, 1987.

44. The use of such terms as 'village community' as applied to residents of a settled village which constitutes a basic unit in a state thus stands in the way of a proper understanding of rural social structure in the context of state society. If the residents of a village were differentiated in various ways, then constructing them into a 'community' would serve little purpose since intra-village as well as inter-village and trans-village networks would depend on how sections on rural residents were aligned across village boundaries. For relevant discussions see B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India*, particularly pp. 125-31.
45. This is why the concept of the 'Segmentary State' as applied to such large territorial kingdoms as those of the Coḷas makes no sense. The concept is concerned merely with a superficial appraisal of how political powers representing different scales may have related to one another but not with the more vital dimension of their vertical structure. For bibliography and discussion see B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India: Problems of Perspective", op. cit.
46. *Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India*, ch. 3.
47. The history of the Guhila lineages of this phase and of the ascendancy of the Nagda-Ahar lineage has been worked out by Nandini Sinha, "The Guhila Lineages and the Emergence of State in Early Medieval Mewar", unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi, 1988.
48. The history and geographical distribution pattern of the ruling families of Orissa of this period are available in Upinder Singh, *Kings, Brāhmaṇas and Temples in Orissa: An Epigraphic Study (300-1147)*, New Delhi, 1994.
49. R. Champakalakshmi, "The Study of Settlement Patterns in the Coḷa Period: Some Perspectives", *Man and Environment*, vol.14, no. 1, 1989, p. 92.
50. Ibid. This seems to correspond to Burton Stein's formulation regarding expansion of settled agriculture and acceleration in the pace of *nāḍu* formation in the Pallava-Coḷa periods, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, ch. 2. For the importance of Pallava-Pāṇḍya phase as marking a major beginning in irrigation works see V.Venkayya, "Irrigation in Southern India in Pallava Times", *Archaeological Survey of India: Annual Report 1903-4*, pp. 202-11; Rajan Gurukkal, "Aspects of the Reservoir System of Irrigation in the early Pāṇḍya State", *Studies in History*, New Series, vol. II, no. 2, 1986, pp. 155-64.
51. R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, A Social History of the lower order down to *circa* AD 600, revised second edition, Delhi, 1980, pp. 240-41.
52. The view, expressed in various publications that landed intermediaries undermining the conditions of the cultivators emerged through the practice of landgrants, has been most effectively presented in R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism* and *idem*, "How Feudal was Indian Feudalism?", in *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, XII, nos. 2-3 (Special issue edited by T.J. Byres and H. Mukhia), 1985, pp. 19-43. See, for the use of the term 'subject peasantry' B.N.S. Yadava, "Immobility and Subjection of Indian Peasantry in Early Medieval Complex", *IHR*, I, no. 1, 1974, pp. 18-27.
53. In addition to references cited in note 52 see bibliography in B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "State and Economy in North India: 4th century to 12th century" (forthcoming).
54. R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, ch. 8. 55. Ibid., pp. 240-41.
56. Ibid. R.S. Sharma correctly points out: 'The non- Sanskritic names of many of these mixed castes and their description as tribes or occupations at different places suggest that these were older tribes or occupations improvised into castes ...' (*Śūdras in Ancient India*, p. 336). And yet, by underlining conquests, territorial expansions and the "practice of planting brāhmaṇas in the tribal areas through landgrants" (ibid., pp. 337, 339) as the only mechanism through which transformation of tribes took place, he misses out on the process of change from below. In the period identified as early medieval, it was, as it has been shown in this essay, the changes from within localities and regions which alone can point

to the ways in which not only were regional communities transformed but were hierarchized as well.

57. For implications of these references see B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India*, pp. 47-53 and 128-29.
58. See R.S. Sharma, "Problems of Peasant Protest in Early Medieval India", *Social Scientist*, vol.16, no. 9 (184), 1988, pp. 3-16. However, the nature of Kaivarttsa rebellion which brought Pāla rule to a close for some time would hardly suggest that they were 'subject peasants'; from all accounts they would, on the other hand, appear to have been a formidable peasant community of eastern India.
59. For references to individual carpenters owning plots of cultivated land in the late Gupta period see D.C. Bhattacharyya, "A newly discovered copperplate from Tippera", *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, VI, 1930, pp. 54- 60; D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, I, second revised edition, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 340- 45.
60. See the evidence of the Paschimbhag copperplates of the Candra King Śrīcandra, D.C. Sircar, *Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan*, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 31-36, 63-69.
61. Niharranjan Ray, *Bāngālīr Itihās (Ādi Parva)*, in Bengali, third edition, Calcutta, 1980, ch. 7; also, B.N.S. Yadava, *Society and Culture in Northern India in the Twelfth Century*, ch. 1.
62. N. Lahiri, "Landholding and Peasantry in the Brahmaputra Valley, *c.* 5th-13th centuries AD", *JESHO*, XXXIII, 1990, pp. 157-68.
63. Ibid. 64. Ibid.
65. Ibid. For the situation in Assam also see N. Lahiri, *Pre-Ahom Assam*, New Delhi,1991, ch. 4.
66. Historical studies on stratification at the level of cultivating groups in individual villages have hardly been undertaken, a major reason for which may be that historians of pre-modern India have generally accepted the notion of village community without considering the range of differentiation existing within it. For south India of the Pallava or the Coḷa period, no systematic study of such stratification is therefore available, the major concern of historians so far having been to underline distinctions between peasant-dominated *ūrs* and brāhmaṇa-dominated *brahmadeyas*. However, the following publications may be consulted for forming a general impression regarding the agrarian situation in early medieval south India: K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Coḷas*, reprint of second edition, Madras, 1975, ch. 21; N. Karashima, *South Indian History and Society: Studies from Inscriptions, AD 850-1800*, Delhi, 1984, chs. 1, 2.
67. For a brief discussion of the evidence from Karnataka see B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India*, pp. 93-114.
68. In addition to the references cited above see S. Jaiswal, "Varṇa Ideology and Social Change", op. cit., pp. 41-48.
69. The ideological dimensions of the society identified as early medieval were indeed complex and despite the fact that brāhmaṇism, both in the spread and perpetuation of Vedism as well as in the crystallization of Purāṇism, figures most prominently in records as projecting the widest range of recognized and revered symbols, it was in itself not homogenous and certainly was not the only point of reference. While the geographical spread of *brahmadeyas*, *agrahāras* and other types of brāhmaṇic settlements was extensive, and the repeated references to branches of Vedic and affiliated learning and the impressive Purāṇic compilations point to the general dominance of brāhmaṇism, movements against the norms and the order which brāhmaṇism stood for as well as tensions within brāhmaṇism were evident and noticeable. There is no systematic study of this as yet, but for some samples see: A.V. Subramania Aiyar, *The Poetry and the Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars —An Essay in Criticism*, Chidambaram, 1969; Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers*, London, 1973; David Shulman, "The Enemy Within: Idealism and Dissent in South Indian Hinduism" in S.N. Eisenstadt, Reuven Kahane and David Shulman, eds, *Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy and Dissent in India*, Berlin, 1984, pp. 11-55.

70. The literature on *bhakti* is extensive and need not be cited in detail. For treatment of *bhakti* as ideology from historical perspective in the context of early medieval south India see M.G.S. Narayanan and Veluthat Kesavan, "Bhakti Movement in South India", reprinted in D.N. Jha, ed., *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, pp. 348-75; also R. Champakalakshmi, "Religion and Social Change in Tamil Nadu (*c.* A.D. 600-1300)", in N.N. Bhattacharyya, ed., *Medieval Bhakti Movements in India* (Sri Caitanya Quincentenary Commemoration Volume), New Delhi, 1989, pp. 162-73. For extensive treatment of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* oriented toward the institution of temples see F. Hardy, *Viraha-Bhakti: The Early History of Devotion in South India*, New Delhi, 1983, *passim*. Two points which Hardy makes and which bear vitally upon the concerns of this essay are: (i) Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti*, expressed in the hymns of the Ālvars, represents increasing brahmanization, and despite 'increasing popularization', it was showing increasing reorientation according to 'normative ideology'; (ii) Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* may be seen, apart from other things, in the light of its contribution toward a 'reconsolidated Tamil awareness'.
71. The degeneration of Indian society in the post-Gupta or post-Harṣa period seems to be firmly rooted in the historians' perspective of the period. A sample of this perspective is the statement made by K.M. Panikkar in his Presidential Address to the Indian History Congress: "Another problem that faces the student is the decadence which seems to have overtaken Hindu society in the period between the 8th and the 12th centuries", Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, 18th session, Calcutta, 1955, p. 17. In recent years, strong statements on early medieval degeneration have come from Devangana Desai in her analyses of art activities of the period: "Art under Feudalism in India: *c.* AD 500-1300", *IHR*, I, 1974, pp. 10-17; *idem*, *Erotic Sculpture of India*, New Delhi, 1975, *passim*.
72. The implication of this crucial historical process in the formation of the structures of important cults has not been satisfactorily worked out yet, primarily because material on the historical stages through which different elements coalesced as also on the general brāhmaṇization of cults is somewhat inadequate. The dimension of appropriation, brāhmaṇization as well as politicization of a cult—and in some cases the growth of a cult to regional as well as trans-regional importance—are sufficiently evident in the history of the cult of Jagannatha: A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathi, eds, *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, Delhi, 1978, *passim*. That the process of appropriation is a continuing one emerges from the detailed study on the cult of Pattinī; G. Obeyesekere, *The Cult of the Goddess Pattinī*.
73. H. Kulke, "The Early and the Imperial Kingdom in Early Medieval India" (manuscript).
74. A. Eschmann, *et al.*, *The Cult of Jagannath*, *passim*.
75. B.N.S. Yadava, *Society and Culture in Northern India in the twelfth century*, p. 380.
76. Daniel H.H. Ingalls, 'Foreword' in C. Mackenzie Brown, *God as Mother, A Feminine Theology of India*, Vermont, 1974, pp. xiv-xv.
77. Banikanta Kakati, *The Mother Goddess Kamakhya or Studies in the Fusion of Aryan and Primitive Beliefs of Assam*, third impression, Gauhati, 1967, p. 65.
78. K.R.Van Kooij, *Worship of the Goddess According to the Kālikā Purāṇa*, part I, A Translation with an introduction and notes of chs. 54-69, Leiden, 1972, pp. 7-8.
79. See *EI*, XI, no. 4, pp. 26-79; XIV, no. 13, pp. 176-88; XX, no. 9, pp. 97-99.
80. For Virajā of Jajpur who was considered a form of Durgā and became a member of the group of *pañcadevatās* or five deities see A. Eschmann, *et al.*, ed., *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, *passim*; also H. Kulke, "Fragmentation and Segmentation versus Integration? Reflections on the concepts of Indian Feudalism and the Segmentary State in Indian History", *Studies in History*, IV, no. 2, 1982, pp. 237-64.
81. Banikanta Kakati, op. cit. In some regions as in Orissa, the integration of different cults came about by combining the worship of deities at different centres through such a concept as that of *pañcadevatā* or five deities. The five gods were Viṣṇu/Jagannātha of Puri, Śiva/Lingarāja of Bhuvaneswar, Durgā/Virajā of Jajpur, Sūrya of Konark and Gaṇeśa or Mahāvināyaka; cf. H. Kulke, "The Early and the Imperial Kingdom in Early Medieval India", (manuscript).

82. In addition to other evidence bearing on the increasing visibility of regional languages, an important indicator would be the chronology of and the manner in which regional languages started figuring in the inscriptions. See D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, Delhi, 1965, ch. 2.
83. R.S. Sharma, in his *Urban Decay in India* (pp. 177-81), envisages the decline of early Indian urban civilization in two stages and curiously derives ruralization of early Indian economy from this decline, thus making the assumption implicit that early Indian economy was not predominantly rural previously. In any case, in his statement that 'the period *c.* 400-650 seems to have been particularly important from the rise of new states or kingdoms' (ibid., p. 168). Sharma obviously does not intend to suggest that there was any direct correlation between the decline of early historical urban civilization and the 'rise of new states or kingdoms'.
84. The term is used in the title of a recent general survey of the period: M.K. Bose, *Late Classical India*, Calcutta, 1988.
85. For example, Perry Anderson who is apparently critical of the particular 'version of materialist historiography' which views Feudalism as 'an absolving ocean in which virtually any society may receive its baptism' but is nevertheless prepared to discuss in detail 'Japanese Feudalism', Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist States*, London, 1974, pp. 402, 435-61.
86. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "State and Economy in North India: 4th century to 12th century" (forthcoming).
87. Despite the fact that the term 'Indian Feudalism' has been coined to stress the Indianness of what is perceived as Indian Feudal formation, the range of variables which have been chosen to construct Indian Feudalism still largely conform to shifts in European historiography. It seems clear, from a recent restatement of "Marxist position in support of Indian Feudalism" (see 'Preface' in D.N. Jha, ed., *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*), that not only among 'antiquarians' but also among other categories of historians, no other satisfactory model of social change, which can be an alternative to the 'Feudal' mode, has been available so far.

12

Reason and Science in Medieval India

IRFAN HABIB

The failure of eastern societies to develop industry and capitalism can be attributed to a large range of possible factors. It can, for example, be seen legitimately as the result of an ideological failure—a lack of capacity to generate growth of science and absorb scientific ideas received from external sources. Admittedly, even in West European history the relationship between industrial development and science has been a complex one. Cipolla has argued that "industrial progress accelerated (only) when the resources of craftsmanship were strengthened by the systematic application of scientific principles developed by more or less professional scientists".[1] But the development of scientific principles themselves need prior preparation. For example, mechanical principles were often themselves derived from observation of existing craft practices, and then, through imaginary designs, universalized by theoreticians. Thus it would be necessary, in the first place, for craft to have previously contributed to science. For science to have the capacity for absorption, systematization and generalization, a cultural revolution too was necessary, creating, with all possible limitations, a scientific spirit—the gift, in Europe, of the Renaissance. For the spirit to be effective it had to be widespread; and this raises the question of the size and composition of the intelligentsia and its relationship to the dominant classes in society, and *their* economic interests and cultural predilections. The lineage of *written* science has been aristocratic and 'elitist', more so as we go back in time. The language of science has so often itself been a language of the very few—like Latin in medieval Europe, Sanskrit in ancient India or Persian in Mughal India. Such constricted integument would be bound to affect scientific growth; and it becomes important to consider what social factors could lead to a breach in that integument.

The role of science in the emergence of modern western civilization thus suggests a very large range of questions, which could be asked in respect of science in societies that have failed to duplicate the success of Europe.

In the present state of our knowledge, it is hard to pretend that we can answer these questions with reference to medieval India. The present paper pretends to do no more than offer a provisional interpretation of the history of science and scientific thought in medieval India where these questions will have at least been kept in mind. It will confine itself to the thought embedded in Persian, the dominant literary language in use in medieval India; to a large extent, therefore, it is the 'Islamic' tradition in India, on which it would focus.

1. The fact hardly calls for retelling that as Islam encountered in its first century the enormous Hellenistic heritage of Byzantium, there came to develop within it an independent, separate system of ideas and sciences. Greek texts translated into Arabic gave the Islamic world the basic principles of its philosophy (Aristotle and neo-Platonists), medicine (Hippocretes and Galen), geometry (Euclid), geography and astronomy (Ptolemy), and mechanics (Archimedes). Once this large body of philosophical and scientific literature had been transmitted, it gave considerable stimulus to philosophical and scientific thought within the Islamic world, though the tendency often to accept unquestioningly the premises and descriptions of natural phenomena received from the Greek texts gravely circumscribed the originality and innovativeness of the Islamic contributions.

For reasons that are yet to be satisfactorily explained, the entire tradition met a severe setback by the twelth century, its last great representatives being Bū 'Alī Sīna (Avicenna) (d. 1037), Alberūnî (fl. 1030), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (d. 1198). There developed a bitter theological opposition to *falsafa*' or the classical philosophy and the theoretical sciences, and Ghazzālī (d. 1111) played an important part in the articulation of that opposition.

Since India became, even in a partial sense, a cultural part of the Islamic world only with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (1206), what it received was post- Ghazzālī Islam. The Arabic corpus of Graeco-Islamic philosophy and sciences indeed became available to it; but with some exceptions, notably in medicine, this heritage lay under severe censure.

The outlook is well exemplified by an anecdote recorded in the conversations of the famous *ṣūfi*, Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn of Delhi (d. 1325). He narrates how a Caliph had been won over by a *filsūf* (philosopher), identified in a later conversation with the great Fārābī. When the mystic Shihābuddīn Suhrawardī learnt of his baneful influence on the Caliph, he immediately went to the palace. There the philosopher was explaining the three sources of motion (*ḥarakat*), viz. natural (*ṭab'i*), self-willed (*irādī*) and forced (*qaṣrī*); the motions in the Universe (*falak*), asserted Fārābī, were all natural (*ṭab'ī*). Nay, said the *ṣūfi*, they were all forced: there is an Angel set by God to move the stars. The philosopher laughed; but lo! as he and the Caliph looked at the sky, they discerned the angel busy at his work. So "the Caliph abandoned that doctrine (*mazhab*), and became firm in Islam".[2]

In India Sulṭān Muḥammad Tughluq (1325-51) caused great annoyance by his patronage of the philosophers: "These evil men, who were immersed in, and addicted to rationalist ideas (*ma'qūlāt*) installed the rational sciences (*'ilm-i-ma 'qūlāt*) within the heart of the Sulṭān, although it is the cause of one's losing faith in the Orthodox Doctrine and the source of the subversion of the injunctions of the 124,000 prophets".[3] The historian Baranī, who was himself an accommodating confidant of the Sulṭān, readily ascribed the Sulṭān's innovative but disastrous projects and his executions of theologians to his rationalistic outlook.

The unflattering picture drawn of the Sulṭān Muḥammad Tughluq's "rationalists", namely, Said the logician (*manṭaqī*), 'Ubaid, the poet and astronomer,

Najm Intishār, the philosopher, and 'Alīmuddīn, a scholar of philosophy (*falsafa'*), has yet the merit of momentarily exposing to light what had by now become almost a subterranean tradition.

Medicine of the Greek (*Yūnānī*) school could still flourish, for the health of the ruling class was a serious matter; and astronomy too had to have a place, professedly for fixing direction to Mecca and the times of prayer, but very largely owing to the requirements of astrology, the favourite addiction of the aristocracy. Thus Muḥammad Tughluq's orthodox successor, Fīrūz (1351- 88), would build a hospital as well as an observatory.

But the main classical scientific tradition atrophied; direct access to translated Greek texts seems to have almost disappeared. Alberūnī in his *Indica* (*Kitābu-l Hind*), had been able to cite numerous Greek texts, which Sachau has listed:[4]

Plato, *Phoedo*, *Timaeus*, and *Liges;*
Proclus, Commentary on Timaeus;
Aristotle, Physica, Metaphysica, and letter to Alexander;
Johannes Gramaticus, *Contra-Proclum;*
Alexander Aphrodisias;
Appolonius of Tyana;
Porphyri, Liber historium philosophorum (?);
Ammonius;
Aratus, Phenomena with Commentary;
Galenus, *Protrepticus* and five other books;
Ptolemy, Almagest; Geography; '*Kitāb al-Manshūrat*;
Three other non-scientific works.

In the sixteenth century in spite of his anxiety to display his command over the wisdom received from the ancients, Abu-l Faẓl is able to cite only Aristotle, Ptolemy's *Geography* and a Hermetic text ('*Hirmis al- Hirāmisa*'); of the Islamic philosophers and scientists, he refers only to Fakhr-i Rāzi, Avicenna and Alberūnī. [5]

The decline in scientific curiosity is illustrated by yet another contrast. Alberūnī's great book on Indian sciences was not followed by any further attempt to explore India's scientific heritage. Medicine remained the only exception, where Bahwa (fl. 1500) compiled a large work *Ma'dan-ush Shifā a-i Sikandar Shāhī*, based on a number of Ayurvedic sources which the author names in his preface.[6]

Abū-l Faẓl, writing in 1595, has some reflections on the causes of this aloofness from India's scientific contributions. He bemoans the lack of the scientific spirit and the dominance of tradition in the Islamic world:

The fifth [reason], the blowing of the heavy wind of *taqlīd* (tradition), and the dimming of the lamp of wisdom. Of old, the door of "how and why" has

> been closed; and questioning and enquiry have been deemed fruitless and the act of a pagan (*kufr*). Whatever one received from one's father, teacher, kinsman, friend and neighbour was considered the wherewithal of Divine Favour; and the holder of a contrary opinion was accused of heresy and impiety. Though some of the enlightened have tried a little to pursue a different path, yet they have followed the path of (correct) conduct no more than half-way.[7]

As in all generalizations, Abū-l Faẓl's stricture on his society ignores exceptions. The period of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries was not intellectually barren. Baranī (fl. 1357), the historian who so bitterly attacked 'philosophy' and denounced heretics and infidels, yet sought himself to give a reasoned, though aristocratic, interpretation of the history of the Delhi Sultanate. He puts into the mouths of his characters the recognition that the Muslim Law (*Sharī'at*) could not be enforced in his time; and his exposition of the agrarian policies of the Sulütāns and 'Alāuddīn Khalji's price-control measures shows a surprisingly clear grasp of economic phenomena. He is greatly attracted as well as perturbed by the State which, in its form of sovereign monarchy (*ūlu'l-amarī*), he sees as an engine of terror, a social necessity as well as a source of tragedy.[8] In spite of his loud protestations of his orthodoxy, it is not for nothing that he appeals to Aristotle ('Arasṭāṭlīs'), as well as to the ancient Persian sage Buzurjīmihr, for a justification of the science of history.[9]

Baranī offers a case, I think, where the subterranean persistence of rationalism through the continued survival of 'philosophy' reasserted itself in an indirect manner; while the everchanging patterns of the historical process forced a fresh examination of received notions. But Baranī had no successor; and if anything the resources of reason that he was still able to invoke seem to have dwindled after him.

2. The major development in Islamic thought, that occurred now, was the elaboration and partial domination of sufic thought.

Even before the Ghorian conquests of northern India sufism had achieved a position strong enough to force a compromise with orthodox theology; here Ghazzālī had been the spokesman of reconciliation. Henceforth the religious were divided into two camps, the *dānishmand* or *'ulamā* (conventional scholars and theologians) and the *darveshes* or *ṣūfis*.[10] But the camps were no longer necessarily hostile to each other; and people with double loyalties could be fairly numerous (Baranī being one example).

The *ṣūfis* essentially brought up three major ideas: They extended the notion of sexual love to the relationship between God and the devotee; they substituted obliteration through communion (*fanā*) for paradise as the object of one's endeavours; and they elevated the position of the mystic guide (*shaikh*, *pīr*) to one of absalute authority over the disciple (*murīd*).

The first two ideas exercised enormous influence over Persain poetry, where these confronted conventional theology and its account-keeping of good and bad deeds and the promised rewards in heaven. The third, namely, the elevation

of the *pīr*, opened the road to most varied superstitions and extreme self-glorification by the sufic divines, reaching their climax in India in Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī's concept of the all-knowing, all-comprehending *qayyūm* (early 17th century).

There was little room in all this for reason or science, let alone logic. The *ṣūfis* were not even necessarily liberal. We have seen with what hostility Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn referred to the 'philosopher' trying to beguile the Caliph away from the true faith by his arguments on 'natural motion'. The same celebrated Shaikh would deny to non-Muslims any access to heaven, which Abū Ḥanīfa, by a humane piece of speculation, would keep open to them.[11]

What created a new fissure in the intellectual stability that Ghazzālī seems to have given to Islam, was a veritable revolution in mystic thought stemming from the disorganized reflections and speculations of Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240). Pantheistic ideas were already inherent in the notion of communion; whence had come Manṣūr Ḥallāji's cry, "I am Truth/God". Though executed for this, he could be venerated by both Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and Baranī in fourteenth-century India.[12]

What Ibn al-'Arabī did was to make explicit and elaborate ideas that had hitherto been esoteric and unamplified. These came into Persian literature with Rūmī (d. 1273) and Jāmī (d. 1492); and Rūmī is already quoted in the conversations of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn recorded in the 1350s.[13] Ibn al-'Arabī's own writings found their first known partisan in India in Mir Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (d. 1446).[14] Thereafter his theories became a subject of contention among ṣūfīs, but by the sixteenth century they had won a surprisingly wide acceptance.

Like other elements of sufism, pantheism had no rational basis, being after all only an extended logical inference from previously accepted premises. In itself it had no capacity to generate scientific interest. Yet, in quite explicable a manner, it could offer the justification for a tolerant attitude towards the rational sciences. This was because acceptance of pantheism implied acceptance of all the contradictions and deviations in human life, which could now be seen not as denials or disavowals of God's law, but as varied forms of representation of the one Universal Truth. Once this stage of logical deduction had been reached, it could become the basis for a sympathetic reception to ideas held so far to be alien and hostile to sufism itself.

Shaikh Mubārak, the father of Abū-l Faẓl, and one of Akbar's principal advisers responsible for that emperor's estrangement from the orthodox theologians, read Ibn al-'Arabī's writings as part of his religious education, according to his biography by his son.[15] Mubārak's lack of enthusiasm for the finality of the schools of Muslim jurisprudence and even some suspected sympathy for Mahdavism might have derived from the disdain towards 'apparent' differences of belief that pantheism generated. But it was the son, Abū-l Faẓl, who by propounding the doctrine of *Ṣulḥ-i Kul*, sought to formulate under the cover of pantheism a doctrine of considerable practical importance.

As enunciated in the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, *Ṣulḥ-i Kul* implied a unity among votaries of various religions, in a tolerant acceptance of diversity, but, simultaneously, an acceptance of the Emperor as God's viceregent and a spiritual guide of the select.[16] It was designed to make the Sovereign a symbol of inter-religious harmony, which, whatever else it implied, was a very imaginative doctrine for a country of diverse communities like India.

But Abū-l Faẓl (as also, perhaps, his master the emperor Akbar) was not satisfied with a mere reconciliation of religions. What is of significance for us is the new outlook of sympathy and tolerance adopted towards philosophy and reason. It may seem a very unlikely marriage between pantheism (the end-product of sufism) and the Greek tradition (the reputed acme of reason); but it was not an illogical development.

The new outlook appears in the branches or stages of learning that Akbar prescribed for the education (*āmozish*) of pupils. In the order they were to learn them these branches were: ethics; arithmetic; accountancy; agriculture (horticulture); surveying; geometry; astronomy; geomancy; architecture; government (lit. government of cities); medicine; mathematics; and history (*ilāhī tārikh*, history of Akbar's reign ?). In addition, the 'Indian sciences', viz. grammar, jurisprudence, Vedantic philosophy, and (the grammar of) Patañjali.[17] The syllabus shows distinctly a renewed interest in the classical sciences; and there is appreciation too of the ancient Indian cultural and scientific heritage. The syllabus had probably no practical significance as far as actual instruction went; but it well defined the outlook of its framers.

Abū-l Faẓl's position on the side of reason and science was, if anything, even more firm. He was no believer in immutable dogma: "If the Great Imām (Abū Ḥanīfa) had lived in our times", he is reported to have said, "he would have written a different *fiqh* (law)".[18] Another hostile narrator tells us that once when Abū-l Faẓl was praising the philosophers and their sciences, Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī, who was present, interrupted him to quote Ghazzālī to the effect that all sciences not found in the Scriptures were useless. Abū-l Faẓl replied shortly: "Ghazzālī spoke nonsense".[19]

If Abū-l Faẓl's style had not been so pontifical and majestic, his *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* (completed, 1598) could have been offered as a model of scientific work. Its addiction to statistics of all kinds, its geographical descriptions, and the summary of Indian (or Hindu) philosophy and sciences, make the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* a unique record. The statistics furnish, as Moreland recognized, the 'base-line' for the economic history of India.

In the *Ā'īn* Abū-l Faẓl's attempt to re-establish contact with the classical scientific tradition is obvious. He offers a chapter on the origin of metals,[20] in which he begins with the four basic elements so beloved of Greek thought since Plato (fire, air, water and earth), and distinguishes the basic metals and their major compounds. He adds that he could not find zinc mentioned in the scientific texts (*ḥikmat-nāmahā*); he could not, of course, because its separation was recent, of Chinese origin. He takes the tables of specific gravity from Alberūnī and gives an adequate description of the methods of its determination.[21] In

geography, he is well aware of the Ptolemaic system, which he describes to compare it with the Hindu system.[22]

The rationality of argument that Abū-l Faẓl imbibed from the philosophical and scientific texts is particularly apparent in his chapter on Economy (*Rawāī-i Rozī*). He first draws a picture of what must have been 'the natural state of mankind' (*nihād-i mardum-zād*): No protection is forthcoming to 'property, life, honour and religion'. The state of affairs can be eliminated only by force employed by just sovereigns. But they cannot employ it unless they have retainers; and these cannot be gathered unless the sovereigns have a treasury, which in turn requires taxation. Thus the subjects must pay taxes which are the Sovereign's "wages of protection" (*dastmazd-i pāsbānī*); and the sovereigns must thereupon extend such protection. The fulfilment of the dual obligation alone sustains the economy.[23] Abū-l Faẓl is here invoking the principles of Social Contract well before Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651); it came to him presumably from the writings of the earlier Islamic philosophers, themselves conveying the wisdom of the Greeks. The choice of it for restatement however does Abū-l Faẓl much credit.

Finally, Abū-l Faẓl displays a certain amount of interest in technology. This is obvious in the details he furnishes of the smelting of precious metals and the processes of coining.[24] He is apparently the first yet known writer in the Islamic world to describe in detail the process of liquor distillation,[25] though liquor was being distilled in India since the thirteenth century.[26] He also admires inventions; and he describes ingenious devices for milling grain in a cart and of cleaning various guns at the same time. These ascribed to Akbar, are probably the inventions of Fatḥullāh Shīrāzī.[27] Their basic principle is, however, gearing (simple, pin-drum) which was already the foundation of the numerous ingenious devices in al-Jazārī (fl. 1206) and the earlier Hellenistic technology.

3. In essence, then, Abū-l Faẓl stops where the classical theoreticians and scientists had ended. This was true of the entire circle of Akbar's courtiers and scholars. Sir Thomas Roe recognized from his conversations with the learned at Jahāngīr's court in 1616 that "the moulaes of Mahomet know some-what in Philosophy and Mathematickes; are great Astrologers, and can talk of Aristotle, Euclyde, Averroes, and other Authors".[28] If the revival of interest in the classical scientific tradition under Akbar was important, the failure to go beyond it deserves consideration.

The failure is seen most visibly in the response to the advances in science and technology made in Europe. Akbar's court received Jesuit missions; and Abū-l Faẓl penned for his master a letter to the Sages of Farang (Europe) (*Dānāyān-i Farang*).[29] But the interest is almost totally confined to religious matters. Akbar's favourite courtier and general, 'Abdur Raḥīm Khān-i Khānān was ordered to learn "the language of the Christians", but in order only to facilitate correspondence with the kings of Europe.[30]

The first documented interest in European sciences is that of Dānishmand Khān, the scholarly noble who employed Francois Bernier at Delhi (1659-66). Bernier translated for him the works of Gassendy and Descartes. "Astronomy, geography and anatomy" were Dānishmand Khān's favourite pursuits; and

Bernier used to explain to him at length the discovery of the circulation of blood by Harvey and Jean Pecquet's discoveries in connexion with the conversion of chyle into blood. He even dissected sheep to reinforce his explanations.[31] But even the translations made by Bernier have not survived, so little was apparently the interest in them among persons other than Dānishmand Khān. In fact the modern European discoveries in human anatomy were completely ignored by the Indian followers of Galen.

The only instance of a noble consciously learning European technology that I have been able to trace in the seventeenth century is given by Fryer in 1675. The Mughal commandant of Junnar kept himself busy "applying himself to several Handicrafts which he has learned of the Europeans".[32] The influence of European technology on India is examined in a recent book by A.J. Qaisar;[33] the total acquisitions known are few, indeed.

In geography and astronomy too where, like technology, one would expect a great interest in the discoveries and instruments the actual expression of such interest are as disappointing. Abū-l Faẓl knew indeed of the New World, to whose discovery he devotes a few sentences.[34] Ṣādiq, in his encyclopaedic work (1647), gives us a very competent account of the Ptolemaic geography, followed by a gazetteer, sensibly compiled list of coordinates and an astonishingly large atlas (33 sheets) of the Old World drawn on the plate carree projection;[35] but he did not give any contemporary information to fill the sheets for Europe; and not a very illuminating passage on *Yangi Dunyā* (the Young World), found in one of the MS of his work (in Bodleian) is probably a later interpolation.

In astronomy the first appreciation of european endeavours occurs in Jai Singh's justly famous *Zīj-i Muḥammadshāhī* (1734). It is curious to find that it was only seven years after work had started on his observatories that Jai Singh learnt that "recently in Europe too they have improved observational instruments". He examined the astronomical table of La Hire (from which he reproduces a refraction table), and reached the conclusion that his own larger observational instruments were better. As for theory, Jai Singh, simply took the Ptolemaic system and borrowed wholesale from the text of the *Zīj* of Ulugh Beg (fifteenth century).[36]

It is difficult to explain this failure in an age when European merchants, physicians, gunners, priests and travellers were a common sight in many parts of India. It speaks of a largely closed system of thought out of which it was difficult to break. That is, it was not only Islamic theology which was rigid, but the classical system of philosophy and sciences too had its own authorities as sacrosanct as the founders of the great schools of the jurisprudence in Islam, and so it too practically duplicated the same veneration for the established doctrines. It would have needed very strong inducements for a breach to be made in their fortifications by their own defenders.

Why the inducements were not forthcoming is a question that can call forth different answers, each suggesting a separate contributory factor.

For example, in so far it was pantheism which in the sixteenth century had provided an umbrella for the revival of classical sciences, the inspiration that it continued to provide for the explorations of religious mysteries helped in the next century to divert minds to religious matters. So came Dārā Shukoh's memorable rendering of the Upaniṣads in *Sirr-i Akbar* and his assertion of the unity of sufism and Vedanta in the *Majma 'al-Bahrain*. About the same time (1650s) an anonymous author compiled the *Dabistān-i Mazāhib*, an exemplary work on the religions of the world.[37] These were important achievements in their own sphere; but they did not contribute significantly to the enlargement of the realm of reason.

There was yet another, and possibly a much more important factor in the outlook of the educated towards facts of ordinary life. This can be illustrated by the sparseness with which the descriptions of actual agricultural and craft practices occur in literature.

First, to take agriculture, or *filāḥat*. An anonymous tract, *Risāla-i- Filāḥat*, was written in the fifteenth century in Iran.[38] Its main concern was horticulture as practised in Iran. This work was incorporated *verbatim* by Amānullāh Ḥusainī Khānazād Khān, a noble of Jahāngīr, who inserted some information relating to Indian crops and fruits.[39] The bulk of the tract, however, had no relation to India. The Mughal Empire thus produced no independent tract or manual on Indian agriculture or even horticulture worth the name.

So also in respect of craft technology. Even the greatest name in Islamic technology, al-Jazārī, was mainly concerned with ingenious devices for amusement or entertainment, and there is little influence on his work of craft devices.[40] This is still more the case with writers of the Mughal period. Artillery was a visible notable addition to the war-technology of the time. But although *Farasnāmas* on horses continued to be written, there is not a single known tract on guns and gunpowder. It is with some relief that one finds Abū-l Faẓl describing an invention of a particular kind of musket which he ascribes to Akbar. It is the first description in Persian of the lock-mechanism; the musket was probably a match-lock, possibly even a flintlock.[41] Craft experience thus remained completely outside the circle of theoretical technology, such as it was; devices such as transmission belts and screws used by Indian craftsmen are described by Europeans, but not in any Indian texts.[42]

The indifference to the manner of ordinary man's labours could in part be a reflection of the restriction of the ranks of the intelligentsia to a very small elite. Gramsci has spoken of the peasantry supplying intellectuals in medieval and early modern Europe through the vast machinery of the Catholic Church. No such machinery existed in India; and at least in the culture transmitted through Persian, intellectuals of peasant origin are hard to trace. There were some *ṣūfīs* who were artisans; but that is about all. The horror at the common man obtaining education was shared by every one. Abū-l Faẓl at the end of the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* reproduces in Akbar's "Auspicious Sayings" pronouncements deploring circumstances where this became possible: Akbar approvingly cited the action of

Shāh Tahmāsp in dismissing a personal attendant who inadvertently showed some knowledge of poetry. On the other hand, Shāh Walīullāh (d. 1761), the well-known theologian, declares in his *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bāligha* that arguments concerning the *Sharī'at* or Law should not be transmitted to ordinary people because such enlightenment would lead to confusion.[43] Education in the higher branches was thus the luxury of the privileged, and the influx into the ranks of the educated from the lower classes was insignificant, if it was there at all.

Apart from the composition of the intelligentsia, in terms of social origin, the actual position of its members in contemporary society could also influence their outlook. The question of the limits imposed on the development of scientific thought by the relationship between the intelligentsia and the ruling class must also be considered. The relationship can take a number of forms: in India it was usually one of personal dependence of the scholar on an individual noble or the Emperor. Bernier ascribed, the Indians' "profound and universal ignorance" to the absence of "academies and colleges properly endowed."[44] Certainly, the absence of such institutions could not but have limited the exchange of ideas as well as autonomous development of intellectual pursuits. The entire aspect needs to be studied; and a critical examination needs to be made as well of the educational system of the time.

Clearly, however, the search for the causes of the intellectual failure I have spoken about leads us further on. Why was there dependence on only the ruling class? The mercantile classes could have patronised scholars, if they could maintain priests and hospitals for birds. There is the question too if a "middle class" was being created or enlarged by the Mughal Empire? These add up to the single question whether those elements in society and economy were present which in Europe aided or even induced the development of rational and scientific thought. My own provisional answer to it given some years ago and in so far as it is a query whether capitalistic relations were developing in Mughal India, has been negative;[45] but it is part of a debate in which the final word would perhaps never be said.

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2. *Fawā'idu-l Fu'ād*, ed., Latif Malik, Lahore, 1966, pp. 84-86, 283-84 (conversations of 1310 and 1317).
3. Barani, *Tā'rikh-i Fīrūz Shāhī*, ed., Saiyid Ahmad, *Bib. Ind.*, p. 465. Cf. Isāmī, *Futūh-us Salāṭīn*, ed. A.S. Usha, Madras, p. 393.
4. E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, London, 1910, reprinted, New Delhi, 1992, pp. xli-xlii.
5. *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, ed., Blochmann, *Bib.Ind., passim.*
6. *Ma'dan-ush-Shifā-i Sikandar Shāhī*, litho, 1873, pp. 2-3. The author declares that the 'Greek medicine' did not suit the requirements of the Indian climate.
7. *Ā'īn-i Akbari*, II, p. 3.

8. I have examined Baranī's principal views in a paper 'Baranī's Theory of the History of the Delhi Sultanate', read at the 1981 session of the Indian History Congress.
9. *Tā'rīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī*, p. 11.
10. The distinction between the two occurs again and again in the conversations of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, *Fawā'idu-l Fu'ād*.
11. *Fawā'idu-l Fu'ād*, pp. 118-19. Elsewhere in matters of this world Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn adopts a fairly tolerant attitude towards Hindus.
12. *Fawā'idu-l Fu'ād*, p. 431; Baranī, p. 459, where the words uttered by Manṣūr Ḥallāj are also quoted.
13. *Khairu-l Majālis*, ed., K.A.Nizami, Aligarh, p. 163 (Cf. editor's introduction, p. 10).
14. S. Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Agra, 1965, reprinted, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 53-55.
15. *Ā'īn*, II, p. 260.
16. Ibid., I, chapters "*Ā'īn-i Rahnamūnīd*" and "*Ā'īn-i Irādat- gazīnān*".
17. *Ā'īn*, I, pp. 201-02.
18. 'Abdul Qādir Badāunī, *Muntakhabut Tawārīkh*, *Bib. Ind.*, Calcutta, 1864-69, III, p. 79.
19. Muḥammad Raḥīm Kishmī, *Zubdatul Maqāmāt*, Lucknow, AH 1302, p. 131.
20. *Ā'īn*, I, pp. 33-36.
21. Ibid., I, pp. 36-39. The absence of any attempt to verify Alberūnī's calculations, made almost 550 years earlier, may be noted.
22. Chapter, "*Gufūār-i Yūnānī*" in vol. II of Blochmann's edition.
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25. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
26. I. Habib, *Studies in History*, II, no.1 1980, pp. 23-24.
27. Cf. M.A. Alvi and A. Rahman, *Fatḥullah Shīrāzī*, New Delhi, 1968.
28. *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Machehose ed., IV, p. 451, Later statements of this kind occur in John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia, being Nine Years Travels, 1671-82*, ed., W.Crooke, London, II, pp. 102-03; Thevenot and Careri, tr. S.N. Sen, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, New Delhi, 1949, p. 247.
29. The letter is included in the *Inshā'-i Abū-l Faẓl*, Daftar I. There are various lithographed editions of this work.
30. 'Abdu'l Bāqī Nihāvandī, *Ma'asir-i Raḥīmī*, II, p. 592. 'Abdur Raḥīm is said to have learnt the language by meeting merchants and travellers; it must then have been Portuguese.
31. François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-68*, tr. A. Constable, 2nd edn, revised by V.A. Smith, London, 1916, pp. 324-25, 339, 352-3. On Dānishmand Khān, see M. Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb*, pp. 14, 179.
32. Fryer, op. cit., I, p. 334.
33. A.J. Qaisar, *The Indian Response to European Technology and Culture (AD 1498-1707)*, Delhi, 1981.
34. *Ā'īn*, II, p. 26.
35. The work is described by me in 'Cartography in Mughal India', *Medieval India-A Miscellany*, IV.
36. Jai Singh refers to the European instruments and tables in his preface (Br.Mus. Add. 14, 373, ff. 2b-5a). See also my article, 'Cartography in Mughal India', op. cit.
37. Ed., Nazar Ashraf, Calcutta, 1809; and other subsequent editions. The English translation by Shea and Troyer, London, 1843, is not satisfactory.
38. MSS Lindesiana No. 484; Br.Mus., Add. 23, 542; Add. 1771, ff. 157b-269b.
39. MSS I.O. Ethe 2791; Br.M. Or. 1741 (ff. 25a-48a); Aligarh, *Lytton Fārsiya 'Ulūm- 51* (wrongly ascribed to Dārā Shukoh).
40. See Ibn al-Razzaq al- Jazārī, *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*, tr. & ann. Donald R. Hill, Dordrecht & Boston, 1974.
41. *Ā'īn*, I, p. 125.
42. See *Studies in History*, II (1), pp. 33-34, for the use of these devices with references.

43. *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bāligha*, ed., 'Abdul Laṭīf and Mīrāj, with Arabic text and Urdu tr. by Abū Muḥammad 'Abdul Ḥaqq, in parallel columns, Karachi, 1956 (?) I, p. 258.
44. Bernier, *Travels*, op. cit., p. 229.
45. 'Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India', *Enquiry*, NS, III(3) (Winter 1971).

13

Vijayanagar Rule in the Lower Kaveri Valley during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Its Changing Aspect as seen in Srirangam Inscriptions*

NOBORU KARASHIMA

In another paper which deals with Vijayanagar rule in Tamil Nadu,[1] I put forward the view that the *nāyakas* in the North and South Arcot districts strove to become feudal lords in the sixteenth century. In that paper I have characterized the historical change that attended the *nāyakas* in the following fashion:

"They (16th century *nāyakas*) are different from their predecessors of the 14th and 15th centuries.... The intruding Vijayanagar warriors in the 14th and 15th centuries were big officials such as governors of a country (*mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* and *mahāpradhāni*), generals (*daṇṇāik* or *daṇḍanāyaka*) who came for some campaign, or revenue officers called *adhikari*, and had the characteristics of an administrator more than anything else".

The above implies that some important changes took place in the ruling structure and agrarian order as well between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, since that paper attempted to clarify the nature of *nāyaka* rule in the sixteenth century, there was little discussion on the change which is supposed to have taken place between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, nor was any evidence given to suggest that pre-sixteenth century Vijayanagar warriors were administrators more than anything else. In this paper, therefore, I will try to clarify this transition by showing the difference or contrast between Vijayanagar rule in Tamil Nadu during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

First, we shall examine the entire collection of Vijayanagar inscriptions of the Srirangam temple, the famous Vaiṣṇava centre on an islet in the Kaveri river just north of Tiruchirapalli city, and analyse the donors of land/villages to the temple or the persons who exempted the temple from taxes. Since the temple has 256 Vijayanagar inscriptions,[2] roughly half of which are concerned with land/village donation or tax remission, and most of which are either from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, a study of them should reveal the nature of such a change, if it actually occurred. Afterwards, we shall select for examination two groups of high ranking officers, one from the fifteenth century and the other from the sixteenth century, for comparative study. For this we shall include some inscriptions other than those from the Srirangam temple.

There are 122 Srirangam inscriptions recording either a land/village grant or a tax remission or both, excluding badly damaged ones and duplicates in different languages. Of these, 4 belong to the fourteenth centuty, 27 to the fifteenth century, 49 to the first half of the sixteenth century, 26 to the second half of the sixteenth century and 5 to the seventeenth century.

The first thing we notice while reading these inscriptions is the fact that the king appears as the grantor of villages or tax remissions comparatively more frequently in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries than in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If we regard Kampana also as a king,[3] two out of the four fourteenth century inscriptions record the grant of villages by the king. Out of the 29 fifteenth century inscriptions, the king appears in four as the grantor of villages or tax remissions. Although there is a larger number of sixteenth century inscriptions, the frequency of grants by the king decreases substantially.[4] For the seventeenth century we have no cases of grants by the king.

Another phenomenon which may be related to the above is the disappearance of grants by a *pradhāni* or *mantri* (both mean a minister) of the king in the sixteenth century. During the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century there are four cases of land/village grants by ministers, but none afterwards.

It is difficult to conclude anything definite from the above, but it may indicate that some change took place in the ruling structure of the Vijayanagar kings towards the end of the fifteenth century or in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The second thing we notice from these inscriptions is the appearance of *nāyakkattanam* in the sixteenth century. The *nāyakkattanam* is a clear cut territory bestowed by the king on the *nāyakas* for their own management. It is reported by Nuniz and Paes, who visited Vijayanagar during the first half of the sixteenth century, that the *nāyakas* in turn had to keep contingents for service to the king in his campaigns or to subdue local rebels.[5] In inscriptions *nāyakkattanams* are often referred to as "my *nāyakkattanam* or "*nāyakkattanam* bestowed on me by the king so and so". There are three such cases in the Srirangam inscriptions. While in no. 449 of the *South Indian Inscriptions*, XXIV (hereafter only the number will be given) only the phrase "as the *nāyakkattanam* of /Ti/rumalaidevamahārāja" appears owing to the damage to the stone, no. 453 states that Cikka Timmadevamahārāja donated the income of six villages in the *nāyakkattanam* bestowed on him by Sadāśivarāya-mahārāya (the king). No. 454 records that Viṭṭhaladeva-mahārāja granted the income of a village and remitted a certain tax from two villages, which were all in the *nāyakkattanam* bestowed on him by Sadāśivarāya-mahārāya. Cikka Timma's *nāyakkattanam* is mentioned as Viḷḷuttanaṇḍalia-sīrmai and the exact identification of this territory is rather difficult. Viṭṭhala's territory seems to have been either Maḷai-nāḍu or its subdivision Pācchil-kuṟṟam.[6]

The grant of some territory by the king to the *nāyakas*, which seems to have started in Tamil Nadu towards the end of the fifteenth century, was a turning point in Vijayanagar rule.[7]

The third noticeable point is that while the donative activities of a family in the fifteenth century are mostly known for only one generation, many of those in the sixteenth century are known for more than two generations, being recorded in inscriptions belonging to different generations of a family. Among the donors of the 122 inscriptions, there are quite a few who hold some important titles as part of their names and appear more than once in inscriptions. In the case of such a personage, we are often able to ascertain his genealogy also. We have such cases even for the fifteenth century. For example, Ilakkaṇa-uḍaiyār who donated 6 *veli* of land is described as a son of Annadāta Daṇṇāyakar in no. 327. However, Annadāta does not appear in any inscription as a person who did something for the temple. In the fifteenth century inscriptions, recorded activities of a family rarely extend over two generations.

In contrast, we come across many families whose donative activities extend over two or more generations in the inscriptions of the sixteenth century. A typical example is the family who came to be known later as the Madurai Nāyakas. The early members of this family who appear as donors of land/villages to the Srirangam temple include (1) Tirumalai Nāyaka, son of Viśvanātha who is regarded as the founder of the Madurai Nāyakaship, (2) Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka, grandson of Viśvanātha, (3) another Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka, great grandson of Viśvanātha.[8] and (4) Cokkanātha Nāyaka, who is in the eighth generation counting from Viśvanātha. Another good example may be a brāhmaṇa family of *Ātreya-gotra*, *Āpastamba-sūtra*, *Yajuś-śākhā* and *Soma-kula*, many members of which appear as donors in Srirangam and other inscriptions. If we take into consideration the families with only two generations, we have some more families in the Srirangam inscriptions.

This is indicative of the growth of locally powerful lineages in the middle part of Tamil Nadu during the sixteenth century. It is to be noted, however, that it was families of intruding Vijayanagar commanders and administrators who increased their power locally.[9] If we see their growth in relation to the emergence of the *nāykaattanam* and the decrease in involvement of the king and his ministers in the granting of land/villages and the remission of taxes, the changing aspect of the Vijayanagar rule suggested earlier will be better understood. In order to reinforce the argument on this point, we shall examine next the activities of two similar groups of high ranking officers contrastively, one belonging to the fifteenth century and the other to the sixteenth century.

As an example of high ranking officers in the fifteenth century, let us look at three individual officers stationed in the Tiruchirapalli area. They are Periya Śiruparasar appearing in a Tevur inscription (*SII*, XVII, no. 562, AD1426) in Thanjavur district, Chauḍappa in no. 309 (no date) and Śiruparasara Viṭṭhaṇa in no. 335 (AD 1447).

No. 335 records that Śiruparasara Viṭṭhaṇa, who is known as minister (*mantrī*) of the Vijayanagar king, remitted the taxes of four villages in Tiruvārūr-ucāvaḍi[10] and Tirucirāpaḷḷi-ucāvaḍi[11] to make food offerings to the deity of the Srirangam temple in the names of several important personages including Hiriya (Periya) Śiruparasar and himself. The extent of those villages and the amount

of taxes accruing from them are also given. He is described as "Śiruparasara Viṭṭhaṇa of Tirucirāpaḷḷi-cāvaḍi" (*tirucirāpalliya-cāvaḍi-śiruparasaraviṭṭhaṇagaḷ*) and there is no doubt that he was in charge of the Vijayanagar administration in Coḷamaṇḍalam which comprised Tiruvārūr and Tirucirāpaḷḷi *ucāvaḍis*. He is also knwon as belonging to the brāhmaṇa community.[12]

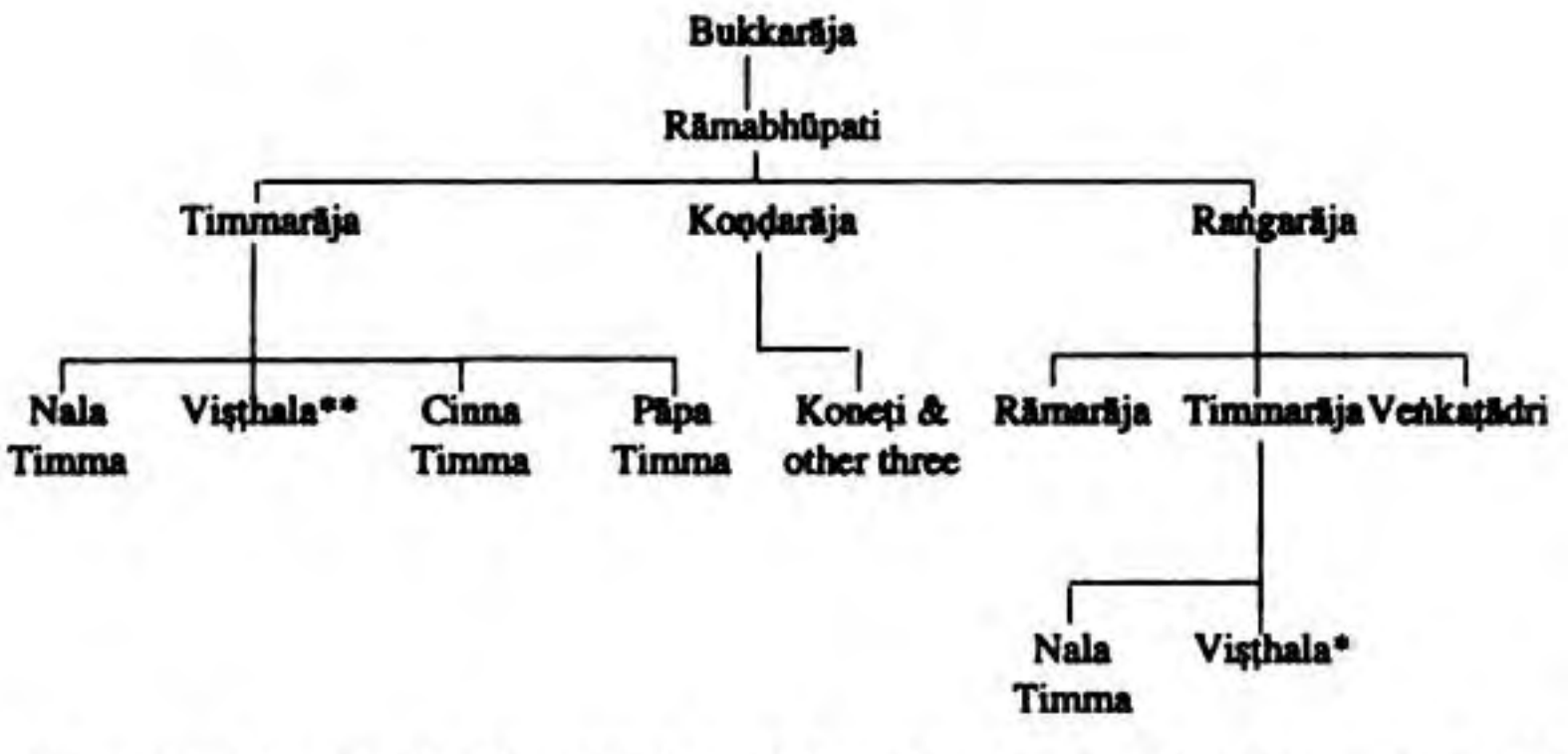
Although the inscription of Cauḍappa has no date, the ruling king mentioned is Devarāya-mahārāya II, and it can therefore be placed chronologically in between the inscription of Śiruparasara Viṭṭhaṇa (1447) and that of Periya Śiruparasar (1426).[13] It records the king's order (*mirupa*) to Cauḍappa to the effect that a village and some lands in another village should be granted to Uttama-Nambi, *sthānika* of the Srirangam temple, exempting them from all taxes. Some other privileges were also given to this *sthānika*. In this inscription "Cauḍappa is also described as "Cauḍappa of Tirucirāpaḷḷi", and Hiriya (Periya) Śiruparasar is incidentally referred to as his predecessor,[14] though no designation is attached to either of their names.

The Tevur inscription records the order of Periya (Hiriya) Śiruparasar to the *nāṭṭavars*[15] of Tiruvārūr-ucāvaḍi. The inscription describes the trouble caused to the people of that region by the misbehaviour of the officers (*adhikārī*) such as the imposition of a poll tax (*maḷḷāyi-avvaiyār-magaṇmai*) and the farming out (*kuttagai*) of estates for tax collection, and though the inscription is incomplete, its purpose seems to be to record the measure taken by the higher government authority to save the people from the tyrannical oppression of the *adhikārīs*.[16] Although no designation of Periya Śiruparasar is found in this inscription, we can presume from its contents and also from the reference to his name in the previous two inscriptions of the Srirangam temple, that he was also in charge of the administration in Coḷamaṇḍalam at the time of the Tevur inscription.

What picture do these inscriptions give us of these three high ranking officers? They received orders from the king. They took steps to help the people of the region attain a better life. They had the power to remit taxes of their own accord, and yet they seem to have been transferred rather frequently to some other post or area. In 1426 Periya Śiruparasar was in charge, in 1447 Śiruparasara Viṭṭhaṇa, and in between Cauḍappa. They are, therefore, none other than the big administrators who worked for the state.

The sixteenh century example of the high ranking officers is a *mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* family of *Ātreya-gotra*, *Āpastamba-sūtra*, *Yajuś-śākhā* and *Soma-kula*, mentioned above.[17]

In Srirangam temple there are 10 inscriptions which record land/village grants by the members of this brāhmaṇa family. Four more inscriptions are found elsewhere, which concern them. Their genealogy is given in one of the Srirangam inscriptions (no. 455 in Sanskrit) and the table can be drawn up as follows:



It is stated in no. 455 that Viṭṭhala (Viṣṭhala) deva-mahārāja (marked with an asterisk in the above table) was sent by his uncle Cinna Timma to subdue the trouble makers in the South and having restored order in the region Viṭṭhala revived the services in the temple. No. 453 records the grant by Cikka (Cinna) Timmadeva-mahārāja of six villages in his *nāyakkattanam*, the location of which cannot be identified. All the six villages are described with their extent and income. It is stipulated that the total income of these villages should be spent for some services in the temple. No. 454 records that Viṭṭhaladeva-mahārāja, son of Timmayadeva- mahārāja,[18] granted the income of a village and remitted *nīrāṇikkam* (dues for water distribution?) on two villages for the benefit of the temple. All the villages were in his *nāyakkattanam* on the northern bank of the Kaveri river. The rate of the revenue is also mentioned.

Nos. 459, 474 and 489 record similar grants of the income accruing from some villages and lands in Tiruchirāpalli and Thanajavur districts by Viṭṭhala, Rāmarāja and Tirumalai[19] respectively, though no mention is made of their *nāyakkattanams*. Nos. 476 and 483 record that Koneṭi Obaḷa granted plots of land in Thanjavur and Tiruchirapalli districts to the temple after having purchased them. No. 475 also records a similar grant made by Kṛṣṇamman, wife of Timmarāja of the family. She donated a village in Tiruchirapalli district and 4 *veli* of land in a village in Thanjavur district. It is also known from the inscription that she owned a *maṇḍapam* in a temple village in the present Tiruchirapalli city. No. 460 reveals a somewhat different aspect of their activity. In response to the appeal made by a temple priest, Rāmarāja requested the king to grant a village which had been converted unjustly from temple property (*tiruviḍaiyāṭṭam*) to state property (*paṇḍāravāḍai*). Having himself obtained it from the king, Rāmarāja granted it to the priest, who in turn granted it to the temple. This is the village in which Kṛṣṇamman owned a *maṇḍapam*.

An inscription of Tiruvellarai (no. 206 of 1938/39) in Tiruchirapalli district records that Obaḷa-mahārāja purchased from the authority (*jīyar*) of the Tiruvellarai temple a *maṇḍapam*, a gardenland and a house site. An inscription of Tiruppalappandal (no. 421 of 1937/38) in South Arcot district recording the remission of "fishing fee" by an officer in charge of the locality tells us that his

charity was made for the merit (*puṇṇiyam*) of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Obaḷarāja.[20] A Pennadam (South Arcot) inscription (no. 267 of 1928/29) refers to a similar merit (*danma*) of Rāmarāja (probably the father of Obaḷa), for which a *nāyaka*, and the *nāṭṭavar* of 17 *paṟṟu*[21] besides some others remitted certain taxes on the land of the Tirutunganai temple. Another inscription from the same place (no. 269 of 1928/29) records that an agent of Koneri Timmarayarāyyan, the *nāṭṭavar* of 17 *paṟṟu* and others donated the income accruring as certain taxes from their locality for the merit (*puṇṇiyam*) of Koneri Timmarāyarayyan.

The picture we get of this *mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* family of the sixteenth century differs greatly from that of its counterpart during fifteenth century. Its deeper involvement in local affairs is clear from these records. Two inscriptions mention that the villages granted by its members are in their own *nāyakkatanams*. In some cases they purchased the land from others for granting. Members of the family continued to appear for more than three generations as donors of villages or lands. Three of them were designated as *mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* in the inscriptions, and most of them had the title of *mahārāja*. Timmarāja had an agent who worked for him in the Vellar valley, and two of the members were given merit by the subordinate rulers and the people (*nāṭṭavar*) of the larger territory on the occasion of the latter's making a charity to the temples. At the same time, it is also revealed that Obaḷa and Kṛṣṇamman owned *maṇḍapams* in some villages. All these suggest that the power of the family had been well established in the locality, while they retained close relations with the king, deriving the legitimacy of their rule from him.

Through the foregoing examination one thing has been clarified, that some structural change had taken place in Vijayanagar rule in the middle part of Tamil Nadu by the beginning of the sixteenth century. This change, together with other factors, seems to have caused the move towards a new social formation. Elsewhere I have referred to some points of resemblance between the sixteenth century *nāyakas* of North and South Arcot districts and the feudal lords of medieval western Europe or Japan in that the *nāyakas* were a group who were granted the territory and the legitimacy of their rule by the king on the one hand, and who strengthened their power through the accumulation of certain rights concerning the management of production in local areas on the other. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, I have therefore suggested that the social formation in the North and South Arcot districts under *nāyaka* rule during the sixteenth century was feudalistic in appearance. The findings of the present study concerning the lower Kaveri valley also accord with this suggestion. To verify it, however, it will be necessary to make further studies on many points including the condition of the cultivators.

References

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1. N. Karashima, "Nāyaka Rule in North and South Arcot Districts in South India during the Sixteenth Century", *Acta Asiatica*, 48, Tokyo, 1985.
2. The texts of all these inscriptions are published in *SII*, XXIV, New Delhi, 1982.
3. Kampana was a son of the king Bukkadevarāya and was sent by his father to conquer the Tamil country.
4. Only three of the seventy-five sixteenth century inscriptions record royal grants of villages or tax remissions, though another three record the king's consent to requests by some officers for permission to make grants of villages or tax remissions to some temples. Moreover, the three which record royal grants belong to the first half of the sixteenth century.
5. Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, 2nd Indian edition, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 269 and 370.
6. From the text which runs "*namakku nāyakkattanattukku pālittaruḷina tirucirāpaḷḷi ucāvaḍi vaḍakarai irācairācavaḷanāṭṭu maḷaināṭṭup pāchilkūṟṟattu kilpalarruk kilaimurai murudūr*", it is difficult to say which of the two was Viṭṭhala's *nāyakattanam*. Maḷaināḍu extends from Musiri to Lalgudi on the northern bank of the Kaveri river.
7. N. Karashima, "Nayaka Rule...", op. cit., p. 24.
8. For the history of Madurai Nāyaka, see R. Sathyanatha Aiyer, *History of the Nāyakas of Madura*, Madras, 1924.
9. Most of the *mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras*, *nāyakas* and other officers have Telugu or Kannada names, and famous *nāyakas* such as Gingee, Tanjore and Madurai claim in some inscriptions that their families came from Vijayanagar.
10. *Ucāvaḍi* or *cāvaḍi* was a large administrative division introduced during the Vijayanagar period, and Tiruvārūr-ucāvaḍi corresponds roughly to the present day Thanjavur district excluding its western part, which belonged to Tirucirapaḷḷi-ucāvaḍi.
11. Tirucirapaḷḷi-ucāvaḍi corresponds roughly to the present day Tiruchirapalli district excluding its norther part and including the western part of Thanjavur district.
12. His name is preceded by his *gotra* (*Maudgalya- gotra*) and *sūtra* (*Āśvalāyana-sūtra*).
13. The date of this Cauḍappa inscription (no. 309) is assigned by the epigraphist to the reign of Devarāya I, but from the reference in the inscription to the two preceding kings (Hiriya-Devarāya-mahārāya and Vijayarāya-mahārāya), we can safely infer that the ruling king mentioned as Devarāya-mahārāya is Devarāya II, whose reign extended from AD 1422 to 1446. Among the other Srirangam inscriptions we find two inscriptions (nos. 329 and 331) recording the village/ land grant by Aṇṇa Cavuṇḍappagaḷ. They are dated to AD 1434 and 1435 respectively. If Cauḍappa of no. 309 is identical with this Aṇṇa Cavuṇḍappagaḷ, he was also a brāhmaṇa since the latter has a *gotra* and *sūtra*, though his designation is not given.
14. A previous grant made by the king "at the time if Hiriya Śiruparasar" is mentioned.
15. *Nāṭṭavar* are the people or the representatives of the smaller administrative division called *nāḍu*.
16. This tyrannical oppression of the *adhikārīs* has beeen discussed in N. Karashima and Y. Subbarayalu, "Valangai/Idangai, Kaniyalar and Irajagarattar: Social Conflict in Tamil Nadu in the 15th Century", *Socio-Cultural Change in Villages in Tiruchirapalli District, Tamil Nadu, India*, part I, ed. N. Karashima, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo, 1983.
17. Three members of this family have the *mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* designation. *Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* is a high ranking administrator who was in charge of some big territory called variously *maṇḍalam*, *rājya* or *ucāvaḍi*. In that sense, therefore, the three high ranking officers of the

fifteenth century examined above could have duly been described as *mahāmaṇḍaleśvara*, though the designation is not found in their inscriptions.

18. This Viṭṭhala is known from the genealogy given in this inscription as the Viṭṭhala marked with two asterisks in the above table. However, the identification of the members of the genealogical table with their namesakes appearing independently in other inscriptions is rather difficult.
19. Like this Tirumalai there appear in inscriptions several names which are not found in the genealogy of no. 455, but which are known from their *gotra-sūtra-śākhā-kula* combination belonging to this family. It is often difficult, however, to relate them to the genealogy of no. 455.
20. Giving merit (*puṇṇiyam* or *danmam*) to a superior by an inferior on the occasion of making charities by the latter may be a way of expressing the latter's fidelity to the former. This point has been discussed in N. Karashima, "Nayaka Rule...", op. cit., p. 18.
21. 17-*paṟṟu*, otherwise known as Irungoḷapadi, is a vast area extending along both the banks of the middle part of the Vellar river in South Arcot and Tiruchirapalli districts and is called so probably because it consisted of 17 different *paṟṟus*.

14

Trends of Change in Bhakti Movement in Bengal (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)

HITESRANJAN SANYAL

I. *Introduction*

Bengal experienced a great efflorescence of culture between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. There occurred at this time phenomenal development of the Bengali language, literature and script and of distinctive styles of architecture, sculpture and painting. In course of this cultural growth culture traits of Bengal developed into what may be called a regional Bengali identity. The process of cultural growth was largely inspired by the *bhakti* movement led by Śrīkṛṣṇacaitanya, popularly known as Caitanyadeva (1486-1533), and its successor, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* (sect). Some trends of change could be noticed, however, within the Bengali regional traditions of *bhakti* from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Such trends transformed the original character of the *bhakti* movement and ultimately shaped the social character of the crystallized Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Initially Vaiṣṇavism was revitalized in Bengal by Caitanyadeva whose spiritual fervour places him among the greatest protagonists of the *bhakti* movement such as Vallabhācārya, Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Nānak and Saṃkaradeva. However, one can demarcate at least two phases in Caitanya's spiritual career. In the first phase he was a householder in Nabadweep and exerted considerable influence on the different strata of the people in his native town. In this phase of his preaching Caitanya gave a broad democratic flavour to the Vaiṣṇava outlook by organizing unceremonial but intensely emotional devotional congregations in a spirit of fraternity. This is one of the principal reasons for the tremendous appeal of *bhakti* in Bengal. *Sanyāsa* marks the second phase of Caitanya's life when he lived in Puri in Orissa. During this phase Caitanya emphasized the discipline of soul through devotion in Rādhā—like spirit, to his beloved aspect of god Kṛṣṇa and developed an inclination for canonical interpretation of the faith propounded by him. Caitanya does not appear to have taken any positive step to organize a sect. But what was significant was his attempt to share out responsibilities among his associates. He instructed his principal associates of the Nabadweep phase, particularly Nityānanda, to concentrate on mass preaching of simple, unceremonial *bhakti* in Bengal. On the other hand, Caitanya deputed two associates from the court elite of Bengal, the Karnaṭa Brāhmaṇas, Sanātana and Rūpa, to develop the canonical literature of *bhakti* in the heartland of Vaiṣṇavism, at Brindaban near Mathura. Sanātana and Rūpa

were the foremost among the celebrated six Gosvāmīs of Brindaban. It was the extensive intellectual and spiritual efforts of the Gosvāmīs in which Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was systematized.

The growth of the endeavours of the Gosvāmīs in what is known among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal as *Brajamaṇḍala*, as distinct from *Gauḍamaṇḍala*, the territorial core of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, brought the latter in touch with the broader subcontinental forces of Indian spiritual tradition, both of the Ganga plains and Karnataka. *Bhakti* movement was now more affected by the hierarchical tendencies and social and cultural authoritarianism which are implicit in the medieval Indian religious tradition. Jīva Gosvāmī, the youngest among the six Gosvāmīs of Brindaban, deputed three Bengali disciples to go back and disseminate the new principles of *Brajamaṇḍala* in Bengal. One of these disciples, Narottamadāsa, settled in the village of Kheturi (in Rajshahi district) on the Bangladesh bank of the Padma opposite Lalgola (Murshidabad, West Bengal) and undertook extensive journeys through the region in order to communicate with the leading *mahantas* of the *bhakti* movement. Then he instituted a *mahotsava* at Kheturi to which came representatives of the various groups of Vaiṣṇavism, who had been inspired by Caitanya. Out of this assembly crystallized the form of social and ideological community, *sampradāya*, which enunciated the seventeenth century principles of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Sampradāya identity in the Bengali regional form of *bhakti* movement was the social product of the changes described above. Its pristine democratic flavour gave way to relatively narrower and more hierarchical practices, which gave it a sectarian character. Such trends, with their own regionally specific circumstances of origin and development, may be found in the kind of sectarian solidarity which developed in varying degrees in the Saṃkaradeva order in Assam or among the Kabīrpanthīs, the Satnāmīs or the Sikhs. These forces of change leading to sectarian developments within the Indian religious tradition also indicate the process of social and cultural change in the different regions of India. In the following pages an attempt will be made to focus upon these forces and the changes which they brought about in developing the *bhakti* movement of Bengal into the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

II. *Characteristics of the Regional Bengali Culture*

The process of the emergence of Bengali regional idioms in the sphere of organized and systematized cultural activities had begun in the eighth century during the regime of the Pāla monarchs (eighth to twelfth centuries). This is indicated by the Eastern Indian School of sculpture and painting and the developments in the fields of language, literature and script since the eighth century. But these developments represented regional versions of the pan-Indian culture (as it was visualized in the Indian traditions since the second century BC) which despite being in a process of decline since the eighth century continued to be the most influential factor in the cultural life of India. The territory through which these developments took place was much larger than the present Bengali-speaking region. Between the eighth and the twelfth centuries Bengal formed

but a part of the larger Indian culture region which covered the area between south Bihar and Assam and included the north-eastern part of Orissa as well.[1]

By the middle of the fourteenth century the Bengali-speaking territory had come to be roughly demarcated from the neighbouring cultural regions. In this region the influence of the pan-Indian normative culture persisted. Besides, with the advent of the Muslims at the beginning of the thirteenth century, West Asian culture traits began to spread in Bengal. In spite of these influences indigenous Bengali elements had tended to come into prominence in the sphere of organized cultural activities in Bengal. From the fourteenth, and through the sixteenth century the indigenous elements emerged as the dominant factor in the cultural life of Bengal, and determined the terms of interaction between indigenous traits and external influences. This is indicated by the modifications of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Śrīmad-bhāgavata* in terms of the regional ideas and idioms in the Bengali translation and adaptations of these texts on the one hand and the literary transformation of the folk tales on the other.[2]

A more convincing evidence of this trend is provided by the regional Bengali architectural style as represented by the *cāla* type of temple which developed since the middle of the fifteenth century. The basic lines of the architectural design of the low, curvilinear *cāla* hut which is associated with peasant culture of Bengal was adopted for designing the exterior of the *cāla* temple. The fragile *cāla* form was rendered into a permanent structure with the help of the advanced technique of arcuation which was introduced in India by the Muslims. But despite the tremendous potentialities of the technique, arcuated constructive principles had been made completely subservient to the unpretentious and simple form of the *cāla* design.

There are indeed many limitations of the regional style of *cāla* architecture characterized by the distinctive features of the hut architecture. The limitations are both structural and aesthetic. But the regional style of architecture had two important features. First, it was the inherent capacity of the indigenous culture to absorb and assimilate in the process of its growth, elements from high cultural traditions. The second notable feature is the confidence generated by the growth of the regional culture traits: the symbols and idioms of the regional Bengali culture were indigenous in origin and character.[3]

III. *Bhakti Movement of Bengal: Regional Self-Confidence Expressed in Simple, Direct Bhakti*

In the context of the growing regional Bengali identity the *bhakti* movement launched by Caitanyadeva exerted tremendous influence on the Bengalis since the early decades of the sixteenth century. Caitanya preached simple and direct faith of *bhakti* (devotion). Deep and inseparable absorption in Kṛṣṇa will lead to *prema* (love) for him. Every individual irrespective of caste, sex, lineage and learning has the inherent capacity for acquiring such unqualified, whole-hearted *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. The means of arousing the inward emotion of total absorption in Kṛṣṇa is the simple, unconventional and unritualistic *nāma-saṃkīrtana*, i.e.,

reciting the name of God. *Nāma-saṃkīrtana* can be done both severally and collectively in a spirit of fraternity and fellowship. [4]

The sense of freedom and fellowship propagated by the *bhakti* movement is but a manifestation of the urge for self-assertion generated by the growth of the regional culture. The focus on the unconventional, unritualistic way of simple worship, congregational *nāma-saṃkīrtana* in the *bhakti* movement and its emphasis on the inherent capacity of the individual irrespective of caste, sex and social standing catered to the socio-cultural needs of the common people. Caitanya and his close associates appear to have been aware of this fact. At the early stage of his religious career in Nabadweep Caitanya moved round the quarters of the artisans and traders in the town and mixed with them.[5] At Advaita Ācārya's behest, Caitanya promised to devote himself to the task of spreading the message of *bhakti* among women, śūdras and the illiterate.[6] This was also the avowed objective of Nityānanda, who was the most influential and energetic preacher of the *bhakti* movement and the main reason for the tremendous success he had achieved in his mission of preaching.[7]

The emphasis on the lower rungs of the society had another important dimension. At the time when Caitanya launched the *bhakti* movement there existed in Bengal several esoteric sects. They included the adherents of Tantrism, Buddhism, Śāktism or Vaiṣṇavism, the Kāpālikas, Abadhūtas and the Nātha *yogīs*. The Tantra-based Buddhist Vaiṣṇava sects, commonly referred to as Sahajiyās, had grown around the contemplation of the relationship between the male and the female principles in the nature of the Ultimate Reality. Their method consisted in secretive sexo-yogic practices adopted as the means to attain transcendental bliss leading to supreme knowledge. These esoteric sects were widely prevalent in Bengal and commanded large following. But at the level of the organized upper strata of society regulated by the norms of the canonical *mārga* or *śāstrīya* tradition, the sexo-yogic practices of the esoteric sects were hardly recognized as respectable forms of religious exercise. One reason for this was the extreme esotericism of the sexo-yogic practices. Another reason may be found in the attitude of these sects towards Purāṇic Brāhmaṇism and Mahāyāna Buddhism. The esoteric sects straightaway rejected the authority of the established religions and scorned at their ceremonial rites and rituals as well as recondite learning of the canonical texts, i.e., the *śāstras*. As such these sects were considered reprehensible and were constrained to remain secret despite their large followings.[8]

The *bhakti* movement led by Caitanya offered the followers of the secret esoteric sects an opportunity to come out in the open and join the fraternity of the Kṛṣṇa devotees without compromising the fundamental tenets of their religious faith. The basic doctrine of the esoteric sects centres around the concept of duality as expressed by the male and the female principles in the nature of the Absolute; perfect union of the two is the highest truth, the Absolute Reality. The ontological principles of male and female are inherent in the physical state of man and woman. Therefore in order to know the Absolute Truth man and woman should unite together physically, mentally and spiritually and

realize their true nature in a state of transcendental bliss. As such, the esoteric sects rejected conventionalism and ceremonialism and scrupulously abhorred high thinking and deep learning. Truth, they affirmed, is a matter of intuition.

The apparent division of the Absolute Reality into *śaktimat* (possessor of power) and *śakti* (manifestation of power) as symbolized by the duality of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā and the relation of love between the two constitute the central theme of Caitanya's religious idea. Caitanya sought to realize the nature of the spontaneous love between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā and the nature of their union at the emotional level through mystic experience. Such an approach may not have been entirely conducive to the religious practices of the esoteric sects but the doctrinal compatibility tended to validate their ideology in a broad-based religious movement in which the different strata of the society participated. Besides, the direct and simple faith of Caitanya with its strong emotional appeal and the unconventional, unritualistic method of worship which promoted a sense of freedom and fellowship attracted the adherents of the esoteric sects to the *bhakti* movement. Thus the *bhakti* movement led by Caitanya offered the followers of the esoteric sects an opportunity to assert themselves openly. A large number of the Sahajiyās had joined the *bhakti* movement and had acquired eminent position in it. Narahari Sarkar of Śrīkhaṇḍa[9] and Banśībadana[10] were prominent Sahajiyā associates of Caitanya. Svarūpa Dāmodara was one of the closest associates of Caitanya in Puri. The Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇavas trace the lineage of their *gurus* from Svarūpa.[11] Rāy Rāmānanda, another associate of Caitanya in Puri, has been characterized as *Sahaja Vaiṣṇava* in the *Caitanya-Candrodaya* by Kavikarṇapūra.[12] The participation of the Sahajiyās in the *bhakti* movement expanded its social base.

Bengal appears to have come under religious and cultural influence of north India since the time of the Mauryas (fourth century to second century BC). Vedic religion, Purāṇic Brāhmaṇism, Buddhism and Jainism had come to Bengal through its north India connections. There had developed in Bengal a few important centres of the different religions. But till the sixteenth century Bengal had looked towards India for sources and models of religion and culture. Some of the Siddhācāryas exerted considerable influence on the followers of the secret religious sects and had composed songs and poems to explicate the ideas of their sects. But the influence and achievements of the Siddhācāryas did not have any impact on the organized level of religion and culture.

Between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries almost the whole of India was swept by a surge of *bhakti* movement. The origin of the concept of *bhakti* may be traced back to the Upaniṣads. Subsequently it developed into a versatile cult marked by a kind of liberal heterodoxy which was distinguished by a sense of freedom and fellowship. Especially related to Vaiṣṇavism, *bhakti* cult emerged as a viable alternative to the orthodox aspect of Purāṇic Brāhmanism and absorbed the tradition of esoteric meditation which prevailed outside the sphere of organized religion. It constituted a powerful parallel trend in the religious life of the Hindu society almost all over India. Thus the concept and the cult of *bhakti* constituted a common pan-Indian heritage. But the *bhakti*

movement that developed in the different parts of India (e.g., in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bengal, Assam, Bhojpur and Punjab) emphasized different aspects of the cult and were permeated with strong regional characteristics. In Bengal the movement was launched in Nabadweep under the leadership of Caitanyadeva. The movement was inspired by *Kṛṣṇabhakti*, i.e., devotion to Kṛṣṇa who was considered to be the sole object of worship. The devotees cherished unqualified and wholehearted devotion of *premabhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. Caitanya himself longed for union with Kṛṣṇa. But to the devotees of Bengal Caitanya was not only the embodiment of intense devotion to Kṛṣṇa but was Kṛṣṇa himself. Thus Caitanya was the supreme object of worship. Even before Caitanya renounced the worldly life to become a *sanyāsī* (ascetic) in 1510, the devotees of Nabadweep had come to be convinced of his oneness with Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa. In Nabadweep Caitanya was worshipped by his associates as being Viṣṇu himself, the Supreme Being.[13] This was followed up by the devotees of Caitanya by the introduction of *Caitanya-kīrtana*, the hymn for chanting the name of Caitanya.[14] Apparently the name of Caitanya was considered to have the same spiritual potential as the names of Hari (Viṣṇu) and Kṛṣṇa, which were chanted in *nāma- saṃkīrtana* as the means to attain *premabhakti*.

The concept of Caitanya's selfhood as Viṣṇu has been crystallized and elaborated in the writings of Murārī Gupta, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Svarūpa Dāmodara, Kavikarṇapūra and Brindābanadāsa all of whom are datable between the second and the third quarters of the sixteenth century. Murārī refers to Caitanya as *bhagavānasvayam*, i.e., God himself.[15] Prabodhānanda explicitly says that the worship of Caitanya is more desirable than the worship of Kṛṣṇa.[16] Kavikarṇapūra indicates that God appears in the person of Caitanya.[17] Brindābanadāsa identifies Caitanya with Kṛṣṇa and focuses on the divinity of the Master from the time of his birth.[18] Svarūpa Dāmodara is known to have composed a theological text called *Gauratattvanirūpaṇa* (Gaura being Caitanya who was fondly called Gaurāṅga or Gaura for his bright hue, particularly with reference to the Nabadweep phase of his career) in which he propounded the *pañcatattva* doctrine. The doctrine regards Caitanya and his four principal associates of the Nabadweep circle, namely, Nityānanda, Advaita Ācārya Śrībasa and Gadādhara Paṇḍita as the manifestations of the five different aspects of the Supreme Reality but focuses on Caitanya as the *Mahāprabhu*, the Divine Self, and hence the greatest of all.[19] In his *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* Kavikarṇapūra has described a complete hagiology of the faith and has elaborated the *pañcatattva* doctrine.[20] The poets of the contemporary Bengali *padas* (lyrics) also regard Caitanya as Kṛṣṇa himself as well as both Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in one personality.[21]

The concept of Caitanya or Gaura being the *paramatattva*, i.e., the Supreme Reality, inevitably led to the theological position of *Gaura-pāramyavāda* which signifies the adoration of Caitanya as the supreme object of worship.[22] As the logical concomitant of *Gaura-pāramyavāda* there developed the iconography of Caitanya as also *Gauramantra* (the formula for invoking the grace of Gaura). Even during the life time of Caitanya his image was consecrated and worshipped

by his devotees in Bengal. The practice spread after the demise of Caitanya.[23] Some of the *Gaura-pāramyavādis* replaced the *Gopālamantra* (the formula for invoking the grace of Gopāla, i.e., Kṛṣṇa) by *Gauramantra* in spiritual initiation of disciples and in ritualistic worship.[24]

The Sahajiyās had developed their own versions of *Gaura-pāramyavāda*. These are known as *Rasarājasādhanā* and *Gaura-nāgarabhāva*. According to the Sahajiyās the Absolute Reality, i.e., *Sahaja* is the *rasa*, the supreme emotion of love, the quintessence in everybody. *Sahaja* articulates itself in its two aspects, namely, *Rasa* (the enjoyer) and *Rati* (the enjoyed) who are conceived by the Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava as Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. The union between the two produces the state of supreme love in *Sahaja*. As the Absolute Reality Kṛṣṇa is the Rasarāja. Caitanya being Kṛṣṇa himself is also worshipped as Rasarāja. The Rasarāja doctrine was propagated by Banśībadana of Kulia who may have inherited it from his father Chhakaḍi.[25] But the doctrine has been explicated in a text called *Bansī-śikṣā* by Premadāsa which was composed long after the time of Banśībadana. In this text Banśībadana has been referred as the enjoyed in relation to Caitanya.[26]

According to the doctrine of *Gaura- nāgarabhāva* and the complimentary doctrine of *Nadiyā-nāgarī* the devotee considers Gaura as the *nāgara* (enjoyer, lover) and himself as the *nāgarī* (enjoyed), a young woman overwhelmed by spontaneous and deep attraction for Caitanya and seeking after him in intense desire of love. The young women of Nabadweep are described as having fallen in love with Caitanya in the same way as the *gopīs* of Brindaban did in relation to Kṛṣṇa. Thus Nabadweep is as holy as Brindaban where Kṛṣṇa performed his *līlā* (divine exploits).[27] *Gaura-nāgarabhāva* is indicated in the *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* by Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī.[28] It was elaborated in the *padas* composed by Bāsu Ghosh, Govind Ghosh and Narahari Sarkar, the founder of the *Gaura-nāgaravādī* group of devotees under the leadership of the Śrīkhaṇḍa's *guru* family[28] and in the *Caitanya-maṅgala*, a biography of Caitanya composed by Narahari's disciple Locana.[29]

The emergence and spread of *Gaura-pāramyavāda* indicate that the *bhakti* movement led by Caitanya had enhanced the self-confidence generated by the growth of the regional Bengali culture. Caitanya had become the symbol of Bengali self-confidence. It is important to note that Caitanya and the ideology of the *bhakti* movement appealed to both the upper and the lower strata of the society. Caitanya's associates included reputed scholars, poets, musicians and other highly placed persons belonging to the upper castes. On the other hand, the message of the *bhakti* movement exerted tremendous influence on the lower rungs of the society even at the early stage of Caitanya's religious career in Nabadweep. Nityānanda and the other associates of Caitanya had brought into the movement the people from the lower social strata including the Ḍoms and the Caṇḍālas who constituted the lowest rungs of the caste hierarchy in Bengal.

IV. *Emergence of Brindaban as the Alternative Focus of the Bhakti Movement of Bengal: Systematization of Faith and Ideological Modifications.*

Caitanya does not appear to have taken any positive step to build up a system or a sect. But there are indications to suggest that he seriously pondered over the future of the *bhakti* movement and adopted certain measures to ensure its growth. Several centres of the *bhakti* movement had grown in Bengal. In those centres, preaching was organized by Nityānanda, Advaita Ācārya, Gobinda Ghosh, Bāsu Ghosh, Narahari Sarkar, Banśībadana, Jagadīśa Paṇḍita, Śivānandasena, Gadādharadāsa, Ananta Ācārya, Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, Rāmānanda Bose and other associates of Caitanya. Although Caitanya had left Bengal after becoming ascetic in 1510 and had settled down in Puri in Orissa he exerted broad control on his associates and followers preaching in Bengal. It was at his behest that Nityānanda had launched extensive preaching among the common people along the banks of the Ganga.[30] On the other hand, Caitanya took initiative in organizing in Brindaban a centre for intensive intellectual and spiritual exercise related to the *bhakti* movement. It is with this intention that Caitanya diverted some of his brilliant associates to Brindaban. He specifically instructed the two illustrious brothers, Sanātana and Rūpa, to settle down in Brindaban in order to revive the sacred places associated with the *līlā* (divine exploits) of Kṛṣṇa and to compose *bhakti-śāstra*, i.e., canonical texts on the various aspects of *bhakti*.[31] Later they were joined by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Raghunāthadāsa and Jīva, who was a nephew of Sanātana and Rūpa. Collectively these six recluses are known as the *ṣaḍagosvāmī*, the six Gosvāmīs or teachers of Gauriya Vaiṣṇavism.[32] Sanātana, Rūpa and Jīva, who were men of great intellectual and literary capacities, had devoted themselves to the lifelong mission of scholarly and spiritual pursuits. Sanātana wrote on *rasa-śāstra* (canons of devotional sentiments) and Rūpa composed texts on theology. Jīva, who was the most prolific and versatile author, reinforced the ideas of his uncles by his penetrating metaphysical works. To these works was added a voluminous compilation by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, probably in collaboration with Sanātana, in which the social and religious practices of the Vaiṣṇavas had been codified. Together the four Gosvāmīs systematized the faith and defined the canons of what later came to be known as the Gaurīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Due to this reason the four Gosvāmīs have been held in highest veneration as the most authoritative teachers of the Gaurīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.[33]

The faith of the relatively liberal, heterodox *bhakti* movement had a very strong appeal to the masses. But the *bhakti* movement in Bengal suffered from certain disadvantages and drawbacks. There existed considerable divergences among the prominent associates of Caitanya even during his life time. Nityānanda was the most dynamic among the *bhakti* preachers and hence had a large following. But there were many detractors of Nityānanda. For example, Advaita Ācārya strongly disapproved of Nityānanda's non-conventional personal behaviour and methods of mass preaching.[34] There were others in the *bhakti* movement who criticized Nityānanda and even refused to tolerate a reference to him.[35] The followers of Advaita constituted a group. They were opposed to

both Nityānanda and Gadādhara Paṇḍita.[36] The ideas and attitudes of the *Gaura-nāgaravādis* were intensely disliked by the other constituents of the *bhakti* movement including the followers of Nityānanda.[37] It was the common devotion of all to Caitanya which held the diverse groups together. After the demise of the Master, the different groups drifted away from each other to establish distinctive identities. Thus there emerged distinct groups led by Nityānanda, Advaita, Narahari Sarkar, Gadādharadāsa, Hṛidaya-Caitanya and Banśībadana. The relation between the groups was marked by indifference and even animosity.[38]

However, these groups shared certain common features. Basically they were *Gaura-pāramyavādī*. For preaching they relied on the emotional appeal of simple and direct faith in *bhakti* to Caitanya and on concrete hagiographical stories of Caitanya's life. As a matter of fact, the entire *bhakti* movement of Bengal centred around the personality of Caitanya. The life of the Master and the examples of passionate devotion set by him constituted the most important source of inspiration. Thus the adoration and worship of Caitanya was the most important factor of the movement. But the movement remained unorganized and even naive. Much was written in Bengal both in Sanskrit and Bengali on the life and exploits of Caitanya.[39] But with the remarkable exception of Kavikarṇapūra[40] there was no significant attempt to systematize the ideology of *bhakti* in its metaphysical implications or by defining the nature of the devotional sentiments following from the doctrine. The associates and followers of Caitanya in Bengal failed to develop a system which could be the alternative source of inspiration and guidance after his death. This may be one of the reasons why the *bhakti* movement had split up into several groups soon after Caitanya's death in 1533.

The astute and profound scholarship of the Gosvāmīs, their co-ordinated efforts and the voluminous canonical works covering the different aspects of *Bhaktiśāstra* which the Gosvāmīs produced presented a sharp contrast to the condition of *bhakti* movement in Bengal. By the middle of the sixteenth century Brindaban had come to be the greatest intellectual and spiritual centre of the *bhakti* movement of Bengal. Apart from the six Gosvāmīs such stalwarts as Loknātha Cakravartī, Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita and Bhūgarbha Gosvāmī had settled down in Brindaban. The intellectual and spiritual achievements of the Gosvāmīs and other leading figures of Brindaban had begun to attract brilliant young men from Bengal. Jīva himself was one of the early migrants to Brindaban. Among those who came to Brindaban subsequently were such remarkable personalities as Kṛṣṇadasa Kavirāja, Narottamadāsa, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Syāmānanda all of whom made very significant contributions towards the development and spread of Gaurīya Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal.

Caitanya might have thought that a combination of the enthusiastic mass preaching in Bengal (*Gauramaṇḍala*) and the theoretical and literary achievements made in Brindaban (in *Brajamaṇḍala*) would build a firm base for the consolidation and growth of the *bhakti* movement. The leading figures of both *Gauramaṇḍala* and *Brajamaṇḍala* derived inspiration from Caitanya. But

Caitanya did not make any effort to coordinate the activities of his followers in Bengal and Brindaban separated by great distance and, as indicated below, by major differences in attitude and temperament. So long as he was alive, Caitanya was the common focus to both Bengal and Brindaban. After his demise in 1533, the two wings of the *bhakti* movement lost contact with each other. The efforts of *Gauramaṇḍala* and *Brajamaṇḍala* remained independent of each other and hence mutually exclusive.

Apparently there was a sharp break between the *Gauramaṇḍala* and the *Brajamaṇḍala*. One reason for the break is, no doubt, the absence of a common foucs, of a leader who could exert influence with both the preachers in Bengal and the Gosvāmīs of Brindaban. Another reason may be found in the attitude of the Gosvāmīs as revealed by the doctrinal position adopted by them. In this regard the Gosvāmīs drastically differed from the Bengal preachers, who were predominantly *Gaura-pāramyavādī*.

Before getting into this question it is necessary to say a few words about the background of the Gosvāmīs and the environment in which they worked. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava creed was systematized mainly by Sanātana, Rūpa, Jīva and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. All of them came from orthodox Karnaṭa brāhmaṇa families. The family of Sanātana and Rūpa had migrated to Bengal a few generations back. But the family retained its exclusive *Kannaḍiga* character as distinct from the indigenous Bengali brāhmaṇas.[41] Sanātana, Rūpa and their two brothers held high positions in the administration of the Bengal Sultans. Presumably they led the exclusive life of the nobility.

Both Sanātana and Rūpa had come in contact with Caitanya after he had become an ascetic and left Bengal. Unlike the associates of Caitanya belonging to the Nabadweep circle, Sanātana and Rūpa did not have the experience of the early phase of the *bhakti* movement, when the devotees of the Nabadweep circle discerned in Caitanya the presence of the Supreme Being. In the Nabadweep phase of his career Caitanya was, no doubt, inspired by Rādhā's intense and tormenting love for Kṛṣṇa and sought to identify himself with Rādhā as the means for attaining Kṛṣṇa.[42] But Caitanya also declared his selfhood as Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa.[43] Caitanya's associates of the Nabadweep circle appreciated his *Rādhā-bhāva* (attitude of Rādhā) but were convinced of his identity with the Supreme Being.[44] This was the essential feature of their doctrine and they proceeded to preach *bhakti* with the conviction that God had appeared in the form of Caitanya in order to propagate *bhakti*. Sanātana and Rūpa were not acquainted with the process which promoted tremendous self-confidence in the *bhakti* movement. Nor did they participate in the emotionally charged mass preaching of *bhakti* with its focus on the women, śūdra and illiterate people, who were initiated by Caitanya and his early associates in Nabadweep.[45]

This is also true of Jīva, the nephew of Sanātana and Rūpa, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa. After completing his education in Bengal, Jīva decided to devote himself to religious pursuits and went to Brindaban in order to join his uncles.[46] Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's family lived in Karnataka.[47] Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa was a resident of Kashi.[48] They never came to Bengal and had no acquaintance

with *bhakti* preaching in Bengal. Raghunāthadāsa's father was a highly placed official in Saptagram in Bengal. Among the Gosvāmīs, he was the only non-brāhmaṇa and had close acquaintance with the *bhakti* movement of Bengal.

Jīva and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa may have just seen Caitanya at a very early age. Sanātana, Rūpa, Raghunāthadāsa and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa had come in close contact with the Master. But all of them had come to know Caitanya after he had become an ascetic. With the assumption of *sanyāsa*, Caitanya's religious attitude appeared to have undergone a very significant change. He no more emphasized his selfhood as Viṣṇnu or Kṛṣṇa. During the *sanyāsa* phase of his life Caitanya intensely desired union with Kṛṣṇa in reminiscence of Rādhā's longing for Kṛṣṇa.[49] Theoretically Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are one and the same, Rādhā being the transfiguration of the *hlādinī śakti* (the energy of bliss), one of the three essential powers in the nature of God. The power of bliss is manifest in the form of eternal love because God has in his self two aspects, the enjoyer and the enjoyed. Without the reality of the enjoyed he cannot even realize his own nature as the enjoyer. Hence Kṛṣṇa expresses Rādhā out of his own existence for his self-realization. The divine Rādhā has natural, spontaneous and all-pervasive desire for uniting with Kṛṣṇa for her entire being essentially follows from the very nature of Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā's love is the epitome of devotion to the Lord. As such, Caitanya sought to integrate to his heart the intense and necessary love of Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa. Some of the associates of Caitanya have seen in him the dual incarnation of the enjoyer and the enjoyed: as Kṛṣṇa in his inner self and Rādhā in his overt attitude and behaviour.[50] But it was the *Rādhā-bhāva-dyuti*, Rādhā's lustre of emotion, which was characteristic of the religious fervour of Caitanya in the Puri phase of his career.[51] The Gosvāmīs were acquainted with this state of Caitanya's mind: his total and unqualified devotion to Kṛṣṇa. They missed the assertive dynamism of the Master's earlier stage of life which inspired the devotees of the Nabadweep circle and made him the centre of their thought and emotion.

The Gosvāmīs lived in Brindaban which is situated in the Ganga-Yamuna doab in Uttar Pradesh. The Ganga valley has been a stronghold of brāhmaṇical orthodoxy from ancient times. The growth of the heterodox *bhakti* movement between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries had eroded the influence of Purāṇic Brāhmaṇism to a certain extent. But by the middle of the sixteenth century the impact of the liberal *bhakti* ideology had begun to subside. The *bhakti* movement of the different parts of India had come to be reorganized into distinct *sampradāyas* or sects which had begun to compromise their position with the dominant influence of Purāṇic Brāhmaṇism.[52] The major all-India Vaiṣṇava sects such as the Śrī, Mādhva and Nimbārka had their headquarters in the Ganga-Yamuna doab. Some of the later Vaiṣṇava sects, the Vallabhācārī and the Rāmānandī, for instance, who had grown out of the *bhakti* movement, had established the main centres of their activities in the Ganga valley in north India. Before the Gosvāmīs came to Brindaban, Kashi, Prayag, Mathura and Jatipura near Brindaban were the main centres of several thriving Vaiṣṇava sects. These Vaiṣṇava sects, most of which had developed considerable or-

ganization with sectarian bias, had spread across the different cultural regions of India. On the other hand, these sects were closely related to the political and social establishments from which they received the patronage of the central state, the Rajput principalities and the rich landlords and merchants. In Brindaban the Gosvāmīs were required to carry on the task of building up an alternative system in such a context. The ideas and attitudes of the Gosvāmīs were likely to be influenced by these circumstances as well.

Thus the associates, the followers of Caitanya in Bengal, and the Gosvāmīs of Brindaban worked in different conditions. Such differences could account for the variations in approach and attitude between *Gauramaṇḍala* and *Brajamaṇḍala*. A clear evidence of the difference may be found in the Gosvāmī's attitude to Caitanya. The Gosvāmīs were, no doubt, inspired by Caitanya but they rejected *Gaura-pāramyavāda* which was the central theme of the faith of the associates and followers of Caitanya in Bengal. According to the Gosvāmīs Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Reality, the source of supreme love; hence he is the *upeya* and the main object of worship. The theological and metaphysical systems of the Gosvāmīs have been built up around the central theme of the love between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. The Gosvāmīs adored Caitanya as a great *guru* and the ideal devotee and even implicitly recognized him as the *bhāgavata*, i.e., God, but they have never projected him as the *Parama-tattva*, i.e., the Supreme Reality. The Gosvāmīs looked upon Caitanya as an *upāya*, i.e., the means of attaining the desired goal which is access into the land of eternal love wherein resides the Ultimate Reality rather than *upeya*, i.e., the Ultimate Reality. Hence according to the Gosvāmīs the worship of Caitanya is not a valid proposition.[53]

The *bhakti* movement of Bengal was launched with the ideal of attaining *prema* (love) which follows from total absorption in simple and pure *bhakti*. Such a state of devotion could be achieved through intense personal experience (*anubhava*) gained by means of *samkīrtana*, reciting and chanting aloud the name, form and attributes of God, particularly his blessed name. Brindābanadāsa, Locanadāsa and the poets of the *padas* indicate that Caitanya and his followers considered *kīrtana* to be the most important mode of worship which gives rise to *prema*.[54] Kavikarṇapūra says that *saṃkīrtana* is the sole means of *bhakti*.[55] According to Jayānanda *kīrtana* is the greatest means of spiritual fulfilment.[56] However, according to the Gosvāmīs *saṃkīrtana* is a practice of piety in the *vaidhī* (in accordance with *vidhi*, i.e., the injunctions of the *śāstra*) variety of *sādhanā-bhakti* (devotion attained by means of special extraneous efforts). *Saṃkīrtana* is important because it is the most powerful means of effecting a devotional sentiment at the *vaidhī* stage. But its potentials are limited because at no stage *vaidhī sādhanā-bhakti* involves emotional realization of the devotee's relation with the desired object, *iṣṭa*.[57] This is possible in the other variety of *sādhanā-bhakti*, namely, *rāgānugā* which is modelled after (*anuga*) *rāga*, i.e., the natural, deep and inseparable absorption in Kṛṣṇa as manifest in the attachment of the people of Vraja who stand in actual relation to Kṛṣṇa as parents, friend, lover or servant. Their attachment represents different *rasas*

(devotional sentiments) in accordance with the nature of their relationship with Kṛṣṇa, such as *vātsalya* as parents, *sakhya* as friends, *madhura* as lovers and *dāsya* as servants. In the *rāgānugā* way the devotee adopts one or the other *rasa* as an emotional exercise towards spiritual fulfilment. In fact, as Susil Kumar De explains, "The Rāgānugā Bhakti ... consists of an emotional sublimation of intimate human sentiments towards Kṛṣṇa, in terms of intimate devotional sentiments displayed by different personal relationships ... between the deity and his dear ones (*parikara*) in the eternal sport at Vraja. It is thus an ecstasy of vicarious enjoyment in the sense that the devotee does not seek to establish a direct personal contact of his own with the deity, but prepares himself for it by imitating and realizing within himself the different aspects of the beatific sports in terms of one or other of the blissful devotional sentiments; and through years of constant practice he ultimately identifies himself with such sentiments".[58]

Rāgānugā meditation was widely prevalent among the devotees of the Nabadweep circle but their approach was different. The difference followed from the concept of Caitanya's identity with Kṛṣṇa. With the presence of Kṛṣṇa among them, the devotees stood in actual relation with the Ultimate Reality. In recollection of Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* (divine exploit) in Vraja, Nityānanda was considered to be Balarāma (*sakhya*),[59] Gadādhara Paṇḍita was considered to be Rādhā[60] (*madhura*), the *Goura-nāgaravādīs* looked upon themselves as *nāgarī*, i.e., the *gopīs*, the milk-maid girls of Vraja who are beloved of Kṛṣṇa (*madhura*)[61] and several devotees, such as Gourīdāsa, Rāmāi, Kṛṣṇadāsa and Parameśvaradāsa, adopted the attitude of the *gopālas* (cow-herd boys) who accompany Kṛṣṇa (*sakhya* and *dāsya*).[62] They adopted the *bhāva* (attitude) of the *parikaras* of Kṛṣṇa for defining their personal relation with the deity in terms of natural, deep and inseparable absorption in him (*prema*). Caitanya's *līlā* in Nabadweep is in fact nothing but the same *līlā* which Kṛṣṇa performed in Brindaban.

The idea of direct personal relationship with the Ultimate Reality persisted in the *Gauramaṇḍala* even after Caitanya's departure to Puri. Gradually the idea was elaborated. The associates of Caitanya and even their disciples came to be considered as the incarnations of the *gaṇas* (dear associates) of Kṛṣṇa. A complete scheme of the reincarnation of the *gaṇas* of Kṛṣṇa in the *Nabadweeplīlā* has been systematized in the elaborate hagiological text *Gauraganoddeśa-dīpikā* composed by Kavikarṇapūra in 1575.[63]

Vaidhi-bhakti is an important component of the Gosvāmī system. The Gosvāmīs emphasized *vaidhī-bhakti* for the benefit of those who remain at the primary stage of religious life. The large compendium called *Haribhakti-vilāsa* lays down the rules of formal religious practices in the rites and rituals of *vaidhī-bhakti* and of virtuous conduct of the Vaiṣṇava householder. In dealing with these subjects the *Haribhakti-vilāsa* accepts the efficacy of caste system, recognizes the superiority and prerogatives of the brāhmaṇa in religious and social matters.[64] The text deprecates the śūdra, forbids acceptance of gift from a śūdra and even suggests that one should expiate if he comes across the sight of a caṇḍāla.[65] The *Haribhakti-vilāsa* considers the *dīkṣā*, i.e., spiritual initiation, as absolutely necessary for beginning a spiritual career. The text lays down

certain rules in this regard. A brāhmaṇa *guru* is always desirable and should be sought after by people belonging to all *varṇas*. A brāhmaṇa *guru* is entitled to impart *dīkṣā* to lower *varṇas*. The *Haribhakti-vilāsa* permits a śūdra to act as *guru*. But it strictly enjoins that under no circumstance can a man of higher *varṇa* be initiated by a *guru* belonging to a lower *varṇa*. However a śūdra *guru* can only initiate men of his own caste.[66] Thus the *Haribhakti-vilāsa* negates the senses of freedom and fraternity propagated by the *bhakti* movement and upheld by Caitanya and his associates in Bengal.

Apparently the Gosvāmīs had moved away from the ideology and the methods which were developed in the early stage of the *bhakti* movement in Bengal and were continued in the preaching in the *Gauramaṇḍala*. The Gosvāmīs did not assimilate the system built up by them and symbols and idioms of self-confidence and self-assertion generated by the growth of the regional Bengali culture. It is believed that the system built up by the Gosvāmīs was based on the teachings which Caitanya imparted to Sanātana and Rūpa. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja is the only source where one has an account of Caitanya's teachings to these illustrious brothers.[67] Kṛṣṇadāsa lived in Brindaban and was closely acquainted with the Gosvāmīs.[68] He received first hand information on this subject from the Gosvāmīs themselves. But Kṛṣṇadāsa's account appears to be heavily influenced by his intimate knowledge of the texts composed by the Gosvāmīs.[69] It is therefore difficult to ascertain the exact context of Caitanya's own teachings. But there are certain indications by which a broad idea can be formed in this regard. *Rādhā-bhāva* was the dominant attitude of Caitanya in the Puri stage of his life, when the Gosvāmīs came in touch with him.[70] Basically *Rādhā-bhāva* is devotion in the *rāgānugā* way. As a matter of fact Caitanya's devotional attitude had been permeated with *rāgānugā* in relation to *madhura-rasa* (devotion as the erotic sentiment), i.e., the divine love play between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* (particularly Rādhā) from the Nabadweep days. In view of the above facts it may not be unreasonable to suggest that the worship of Kṛṣṇa as the *parama-tattva* (Ultimate Reality) was the central focus of Caitanya's teachings to Sanātana and Rūpa and that he had instructed them to concentrate on *rāgānugā-bhakti* modelled after the attachment of the *gopīs* who stand in *madhura* relation to Kṛṣṇa.

The teachings of Caitanya might have induced the Gosvāmīs to focus on Kṛṣṇa worship and to emphasize the devotional sentiment of the *gopīs* as the model and the source of the *rāgānugā* way. But the Gosvāmīs' situation in Brindaban as well may have influenced the ideas and methods propounded by them. The *bhakti* movement of Bengal and the influence of Caitanya were essentially regional phenomena. The symbols and idioms of the regional *bhakti* movement could have no appeal in the other cultural regions of India. In the context of the religious and cultural environment of north India and the broader dimensions with which the existing Vaiṣṇava sects rooted in the Ganga valley operated, the Gosvāmīs might have found it necessary to outgrow the characteristics of the regional Bengali culture. This may have induced the Gosvāmīs to endow the system of theology, metaphysics and devotional sentiments

contemplated by them with a wider appeal so that the system might cut across the boundaries of regional cultural identity. It is only in this way that the Gosvāmīs could present their system as a viable alternative to the existing systems of the *bhakti* cult. A broad-based system could be built up only with Kṛṣṇa as the central focus on the supreme deity of the faith. Caitanya could not fulfil their requirements.

The theological implications of Kṛṣṇa as the Ultimate Reality was established long before the Gosvāmīs began their work. The *gaṇas* or *parikaras* of Kṛṣṇa are the embodiments of his *svarūpa śakti* (the power which he possesses by virtue of his ultimate nature). As *jīva* human beings are the manifestations of his *taṭastha śakti* (the power through which all beings are created, accidental power). The *sādhaka* (meditator) being a *jīva* cannot aspire to attain the position of *parikaras* of Kṛṣṇa. Apparently the Gosvāmīs had accepted this established theological position. As such the *rāgānugā bhakti* as interpreted by the Gosvāmīs has a much lesser spiritual significance from the point of view of the common devotees than the manner in which it was understood by the devotees of *Gauramaṇḍala*. The devotees of the Nabadweep circle had taken Caitanya's identity with Kṛṣṇa as established by personal experience (*anubhava*). They were inspired by a tremendous self-confidence owing to their intimate relation with Kṛṣṇa appearing in the form of Caitanya. From the standpoint of the Nabadweep devotees *rāgānugā* consisted in reenactment of the roles which they had played earlier in the *Brindāban-līlā*.

V. *Interaction Between the Tradition of Bhakti Movement in Bengal and the Gosvāmī System: Emergence of Syncretic Faith*

After the death of Sanātana and Rūpa which occurred between 1556 and 1558,[71] Jīva Gosvāmī came to be recognized as the greatest authority of the Gosvāmī system. Sometime between 1566 and the early years of the 1570s Jīva entrusted three promising Bengali students, namely, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Narottamadāsa and Śyāmānanda, with the mission of propagating the Gosvāmī system in Bengal.[72] Śrīnivāsa, Narottama and Śyāmānanda had come to Brindaban for studying the Vaiṣṇava *śāstras* and to receive spiritual training under the guidance of the stalwarts of Brindaban. During their sojourn in Brindaban all of them had come to be thoroughly conversant with the Gosvāmīs' creed and developed close intellectual and spiritual acquaintance with the leading personalities of Brindaban including Jīva.[73]

Śrīnivāsa, Narottama and Śyāmānanda brought to Bengal the creed systematized by the Gosvāmīs of Brindaban. But the tenets, doctrines and dogmas and the method of worship of the new system apparently varied strongly with the trends that characterized the tradition of the *bhakti* movement in Bengal. As indicated above, the *bhakti* movement in Bengal had split into various groups after the demise of Caitanya in 1533. But the followers of the *bhakti* movement strongly adhered to *Gaura-pāramyavāda*. The tradition of unconventional congregational worship and the ideas of freedom, fellowship and fraternity were firmly entrenched in them. It is in this context that Śrīnivāsa, Narottamadāsa

and Śyāmānanda arrived in Bengal with the task of propagating the creed developed in Brindaban.

Among the three missionaries sent by Jīva, Śyāmānanda concentrated on the border areas between Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.[74] Śrīnivāsa preached in Mallabhum in southwest Bengal and in a few other places and taught *bhakti-śāstra*. He also visited a few centres of the *bhakti* movement and met the leading Vaiṣṇavas for the purpose of interaction and mutual understanding.[75] But the actual task of reorganizing the Vaiṣṇava movement between the Gosvāmī system and the tradition of the *bhakti* movement was taken up by Narottamadāsa.

Narottama settled down in the village of Kheturi (Rajshahi district, Bangladesh). Then he set himself to the task of combining the different Vaiṣṇava groups into a co-ordinated course of action. Narottama toured extensively in Bengal and went to Puri in order to visit the important centres of the *bhakti* movement and meet the leaders of the different groups.[76] After the tour, Narottama organized a *mahotsava* (literally, great festival) for celebrating the installation of six sets of images at Kheturi. It is not clearly known when the festival occurred. But it appears to have taken place sometime between 1576 and 1582.[77] On Narottama's invitation most of the leading Vaiṣṇavas (*mahantas*) representing the various shades of opinion including the adherents of the Gosvāmī system and the Sahajiyās attended the festival along with their disciples. The *mahantas* included Jahṇavā Devī, Nityānanda's widow and the leader of his followers, Acyutānanda, son of Advaita, Raghunandana, the leader of the *Gaura-nāgaravādī* group, Śrīcaitanyadāsa, who represented the *Rasarāja* group, Hṛdaya-caitanya of Kalna, Jadunandana, disciple of Gadādharadāsa, and the adherents of the Gosvāmī system represented by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Śyāmānanda, Rasikamurārī, and Rāmacandra Kavirāja.[78] Thus Vaiṣṇavas belonging to different groups assembled on the occasion of the Kheturi *mahotsava*. It marked the earliest occasion for organizing the adherents of the Gosvāmī system and the different groups of the *Gaura-pāramyavādīs* including the highly esoteric Sahajiyās. This effort was made under the aegis of the systematized and canonical system propounded in the voluminous texts composed by the Gosvāmīs of Brindaban and reinforced by the spiritual authority of the Vaiṣṇava luminaries of Brindaban.

In the presence of this vast congregation of the various groups of the Vaiṣṇavas and with the approval of the assembled *mahanta* Narottama installed six sets of images, five of which represented the divine couple Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in their different aspects. The rest, i.e., the sixth one was Gaurāṅga-Viṣṇupriyā representing Caitanya and his wife.[79] All the images were consecrated according to the rules laid down by the Gosvāmī texts.[80]

The installation of the Gaurāṅga-Viṣṇupriyā image along with the images of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa according to the rituals prescribed by the Gosvāmīs indicate a most interesting aspect of the attitude and efforts of Narottama. The devotees belonging to the Nabadweep circle who formed the core of the *bhakti* movement in *Gauramaṇḍala* came under the influence of Caitanya at the pre-*sanyāsa*

phase of his life and were devoted to the handsome youngman that he was. Apparently it is due to this reason that the early Bengali *padas* on Caitanya composed by the poets of the *Gauramaṇḍala* refer to his beautiful young appearance and to the names of Gaurāṅga, Gora or Gaurakiśora which are associated with it.[81] The images of Caitanya which were conceived by the *Gauramaṇḍala* devotees represent Gaura dressed as a respectable and charming youngman. The Gosvāmīs, who had seen Caitanya in his *sanyāsa* life only, invariably refer to his *yativeśa* (ascetic's appearance) while adoring the Master in their texts. Naturally the Gosvāmī texts do not recognize the existence of Viṣṇupriyā. By installing Gaurāṅga-Viṣṇupriyā image in Kheturi Narottama demonstrated the acceptance by the adherents of the Gosvāmī system of *Gaura-pāramyavāda*, in other words, Caitanya's selfhood as Kṛṣṇa who is the *Parama-tattva* according to the view of the Gosvāmīs. The appearance of Viṣṇupriyā by the side of Caitanya reinforces the identification. Viṣṇupriyā is conceived as the consort of Caitanya in the same way as Rādhā is the *hlādinī-śakti* (energy of bliss) of Kṛṣṇa. Pairing of Viṣṇupriyā with Caitanya may have been a concession to the Sahajiyās as well. The Sahajiyās had already begun to focus on the *śakti*, i.e., the Female Principle in Caitanya.

Two types of *kīrtana* songs are prevalent among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal. These are *nāma-saṃkīrtana* and *līlā* or *rasa-kīrtana*. Vaiṣṇava *kīrtana* might have originated in the earlier tradition of the Buddhist Sahajiyā and Nāthapanthī *caryā* songs as well as in the *pañcālī* or *vijaya* songs narrating the exploits of different gods and goddesses.[82] A preliminary form of *kīrtana* might have been prevalent in Bengal before the advent of Caitanya. But Caitanya appears to have evolved a distinctive and perhaps an improved form of *nāma-saṃkīrtana*, i.e., reciting and chanting the name of God and gave it a special significance as the principal means of worship with tremendous spiritual potentialities.[83] *Līlā-kīrtana* is a long narrative song dealing with the exploits (*līlā*) of God. A narrative is composed of lyrics written by the Vaiṣṇava poets on a particular episode arranged sequentially and woven into a systematic course of development explicating certain ideas. Narottama is credited to have organized the structure of *līlā-kīrtana* in accordance with the definition and interpretation of the different *rasas* (devotional sentiments) given by the Gosvāmīs. Indeed *līlā-kīrtana* had become the most powerful medium of spreading the ideas of the Gosvāmīs among the common people.

In the Kheturi *mahotsava* Narottama introduced the *līlā-kīrtana* designed by him. Rūpa Gosvāmī has classified *kīrtana* into three types, namely, *nāma-kīrtana*, *guṇa-kīrtana* and *līlā-kīrtana* all of which are songs on Kṛṣṇa or about him.[84] But in the Kheturi festival Narottama began the proceedings with the preface of *Gaura-candrikā*, i.e., songs in adoration of Gauracandra.[85] *Gaura-candrikā* songs consisted of *padas* pertaining to *Gaura-pāramyavāda* composed by the poets of *Gauramaṇḍala*. The practice of prefacing *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* by *Gaura-candrikā* represents the idea of identifying Caitanya with Kṛṣṇa but with a particular emphasis on Kṛṣṇa worship. Narottama appears to have projected the same idea by installing a Gaurāṅga-Viṣṇupriyā image along with five Rādhā-

Kṛṣṇa images. Apparently Narottama sought to reconcile the Gosvāmī system with the tradition prevalent in Bengal. He accepted Caitanya as being equal to Kṛṣṇa, but with an indication that Kṛṣṇa is more equal and hence is the main object of worship. This is inevitable because Narottama did not intend to deviate from the Gosvāmīs whose theological and metaphysical speculations and devotional sentiments had been built up entirely on the basic doctrine of Kṛṣṇa being the *Parama-tattva*.

The festival of Kheturi offered the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal the opportunity to know closely the Gosvāmī system with modifications as envisaged by its adjustments to the tradition of *bhakti* movement of Bengal with particular reference to *Gaura-pāramyavāda*. The modified system provided the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal with what they lacked hitherto, namely, a systematic formulation of their faith in the body of concrete *śāstrīya* discourse. The Kheturi congregation might have been conceived as a common platform for the different groups of the *bhakti* movement to meet each other for interaction and mutual understanding under the influence of the Gosvāmī system.

Apart from *Gaura-pāramyavāda* Narottama had adapted to the Gosvāmī system certain other major features of the *bhakti* movement of Bengal which expanded the popular base of his mission. As indicated above, Caitanya had emphasized the immense potential of *saṃkīrtana* as the means of acquiring *prema* (love for God), the highest state of spiritual experience. But the Gosvāmīs considered it to be merely religious practice with limited significance. Notwithstanding the views of the Gosvāmīs Narottama affirmed the immense spiritual potentialities of *nāma-kīrtana*. According to Narottama one can transcend all worldly limitations by means of *nāma-kīrtana*. Following Caitanya, Narottama firmly declared that even the lowliest is entitled to perform *nāma- kīrtana* on his own right. It can be performed at any time and at any place without any spiritual guidance or ritual.[86] This may be construed as negation of the injunctions of the *Haribhakti-vilāsa* which prescribes *vaidhī-bhakti* for the common laity and considered spiritual initiation by the *guru* indispensable.

The *Haribhakti-vilāsa* has upheld the validity of caste hierarchy in religious matters. But in pursuance of the tradition of the *bhakti* movement in Bengal Narottama disregarded caste restrictions in his preaching mission. In the Kheturi festival the caṇḍālas, one of the lowliest castes of Bengal, were received with great consideration.[87] Narottama was a kāyastha, a śūdra caste of Bengal. In spite of the specific injunction of the *Haribhakti-vilāsa* prohibiting a lower caste *guru* from imparting initiation to an upper caste person Narottama had initiated several brāhmaṇa disciples.[88] Śyāmānanda, who was born in a lower śūdra caste, had also initiated higher caste devotees including brāhmaṇas.[89] Considerable commotion was generated by Narottama initiating brāhmaṇas. In the context of the tension a conference was held at Kheturi in which many brāhmaṇa scholars were present. In this conference, which endorsed Narottama's right to initiate brāhmaṇas, Śrīnivāsa and Bīracandra, son of Nityānanda, who succeeded Jahṇavā as the head of the followers of Nityānanda, announced that a

person who had attained devotion to Kṛṣṇa, was greater than a brāhmaṇa.[90] This position closely resembles the views of Caitanya.

Another important aspect of the efforts of Narottama and his colleagues is their enthusiastic promotion of *Mañjarī sādhanā*, a highly esoteric mode of meditation. *Mañjari sādhanā* follows from the elaboration of the *rāgānugā* meditation as conceived by the Gosvāmīs. Kṛṣṇa unites with Rādhā, who is the transfiguration of his own *hlādinī śakti* (energy of bliss) as a matter of natural process. In their *līlā* (divine sport) the divine couple is assisted and protected by a group of young girls, the *sakhīs*. They originate in Kṛṣṇa being the embodiment of his *svarūpa śakti* (the power he possesses by virtue of his ultimate nature). Due to this reason the *sakhīs* have in them the motive force of *rāga* (spontaneous, deep and inseparable absorption in Kṛṣṇa) and are *nitya-siddha* (emancipated by virtue of their existence). Thus the *sakhīs* stand in intimate relation to Kṛṣṇa. According to the complete scheme of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava hagiology Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are attended by another group of young maids called *mañjarīs*. Like the *sakhīs*, the *mañjarīs* are manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa śakti*. As such the *mañjarīs*' devotion to Kṛṣṇa is *rāgātmikā* (essentially flowing from *rāga*) and they are *nitya-siddha*. But the *mañjarīs* rank below the *sakhīs* and are subservient to them. In this capacity the *mañjarīs* serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in their *līlā* and enjoy the right to remain with Kṛṣṇa. But they are not Kṛṣṇa's *parama-preṣṭā* (most dear ones) to which position the *sakhīs* belong.

Rāgānugā bhakti has two aspects, namely, *bāhya* (overt) and *antara* (internal). The *antara* aspect, which involves emotional sublimation of human sentiments, is considered to be more efficacious. In practising *antara rāgānugā bhakti* the meditator adopts in his mind a *sakhī* or a *mañjarī* as the ideal of his *siddha deha* (emancipated being) and endeavours to imitate her characteristics in respect of appearance, attitude and function by means of mental exercise so that he can prepare himself for serving Kṛṣṇa. However, it is better to take resort to a *mañjarī* rather than a *sakhī*, because *jīva* (phenomenal being) being the manifestation of the *taṭastha śakti* (accidental power) of Kṛṣṇa is actually incapable of adopting the *bhāva* (attitude) of those who are dear to Kṛṣṇa. In view of the limitations of *jīva* the position of *mañjarī* is more conducive for his *sādhanā*. The meditator may even seek to serve the *mañjarī*.[91]

All these ideas follow from the Gosvāmīs' interpretation of *rāgānugā bhakti* according to which man cannot attain *rāgātmikā bhakti* but can prepare himself for access to the land of eternal love by following the devotional sentiments of the *parikaras* of Kṛṣṇa. However, in their canonical texts the Gosvāmīs do not refer to *mañjarī sādhanā* as a mode of meditation. Yet there are reasons to believe that *mañjarī sādhanā* orginated with the Gosvāmīs, particularly Rūpa and Raghunāthadāsa. In their devotional compositions, namely, *Stavamālā* by Rūpa and *Stavāvalī* by Raghunāthadāsa they have indicated passionate desire to serve Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in various manners. The services they intend to perform include menial services for the divine couple even during their union. This does not fit the position of the *sakhī* whose duty is to advise Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on the means by which they could meet each other and to protect them

from troubles and hazards. As the later sources indicate, menial services are performed by the *mañjarīs* only.[92] The Gosvāmīs may also have practised *mañjarī sādhanā*. In fact, Kavikarṇapūra and Narottamadāsa explicitly state that the Gosvāmīs had acquired success in *mañjarī sādhanā*.[93]

The concept of *mañjarī sādhanā* was developed into a complete system of meditation by Narottamadāsa, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and their close associates and disciples, such as, Rāmacandra Kavirāja. They defined the hierarchy between the *sakhīs* and the *mañjarīs* with respect to their position vis-a-vis Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and distinguished between the types of services that the *sakhīs* and the *mañjarīs* are supposed to perform. The *mañjarīs* serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in different manners. Their functions include preparing bed for the divine couple, massaging their feet and fanning them when they are engaged in love-making and to make arrangements for their comfort after union. The *sakhīs'* functions are also related to the divine love of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. But as indicated by their position of *prama- preṣṭā*, *sakhīs* do not remain on the spot when Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā enjoy themselves. The inferior position to which the *mañjarīs* are entitled require them to attend upon the divine couple even during their union.[94]

The *mañjarīs* hold the position of menial in the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. But spiritually the position of the *mañjarīs* has deep significance. They remain in close relationship with the union of the two aspects in the nature of the absolute reality, namely, the enjoyer (the male par excellence) and his female principle, the enjoyed, and observe the source of the supreme love which the union creates but never desire to be enjoyed. Through intense emotional identification with the attitude of the *mañjarī* the meditator tries to transcend *puruṣābhimāna*, the pride as a male, or more broadly human instincts. Thus *mañjarī sādhanā* is a systematic exercise for transforming a highly erotic symbolism into an acute spiritual process towards an understanding of the nature of the Absolute Reality.

Soon after it was introduced in Bengal *mañjarī sādhanā* became widely prevalent among the different sections of the Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal. Numerous *padas* datable to the seventeenth century testify to its popularity. It offered a complete system of meditation in the *rāgānugā* way related to *madhura rasa* which seems to have been the dominant devotional sentiment in Bengal. *Mañjarī sādhanā* was also compatible with the *rāgānugā* way of the *dāsya rasa*, (devotional sentiment of servitude). Indeed *mañjarī sādhanā* combined with *madhura* a strong sense of *dāsya*. But the more important thing about *mañjarī sādhanā* is that it proved to be instrumental in integrating the Sahjiyās to the main trend of Bengal's Vaiṣṇava movement which was organized by Narottama and his colleagues.

Apparently the ideology of the Sahajiyās was incompatible with the ideology of *mañjarī sādhanā*. According to the *rāgānugā* doctrine as interpreted by the Gosvāmīs, phenomenal beings cannot even attain the position of the divine associates of Kṛṣṇa; their *sādhanā* consists in following the devotion of Kṛṣṇa's associates. On the contrary, the Sahajiyās conceive every man and woman to be intrinsically divine in nature because they represent the male and the female

principles of the Absolute Reality. By means of sexo-yogic *sādhanā* every man and woman can discern their pure nature as divine self. The union of the divine male and female generates supreme bliss which is the highest state of spiritual experience because it is in this state that one can realize the ultimate nature of the Absolute Reality. Sashibhushan Dasgupta has pointed out that the Sahajiyās had undergone a process of change both ideologically and methodologically under the influence of Vaiṣṇavism. The transformation was possible because the Buddhist Sahajiyās had modified the original Mahāyāna doctrine of Ultimate Reality into a positive state of rarity and perfect enlightenment which is *Sahaja*.[95] The Vaiṣṇava concept of the Ultimate Reality is also a "positive state, though of a supra-mental nature, of eternal flow of divine love".[96] The Vaiṣṇavas conceived the Ultimate Reality as supreme love which is manifest in the relation between its two aspects, namely, the enjoyer (Kṛṣṇa) and the enjoyed (Rādhā). Drawing upon the Vaiṣṇava ideas the Sahajiyās interpreted the final positive state arising out of the union of the male and female principles called *Rasa* and *Rati* in the Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava parlance, as the state of supreme love. Transformation of ideology led to change of methodology. There had developed in the Sahajiyā Buddhist cult a tendency towards psychological upliftment rather than emphasis on psycho-physiological yogic practices which constitute a major characteristic of the esoteric sects. The Buddhist Sahajiyās practised yogic control of sex emotions in order to raise the mind to a state at which man transcends all temporal relations and attains supreme bliss in absolute *Sahaja*. Under the influence of Vaiṣṇavism the Sahajiyās concentrated more on psychological development towards transcendental spiritual experience.[97]

Mañjarī sādhanā offered the Sahajiyās further opportunities for realizing supreme love through psychological exercise. Pure love arises only when man and woman can realize their true divine self by removing the worldly principles of nescience and grossness through continual and stringent mental discipline. Originally the Sahajiyās believed that physical union of man and woman is a potential means of attaining *Sahaja*. But the aim of the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās, at least theoretically, is to eliminate even at the initial stage, both from the body and the mind all animal instincts so as to be fit for practising true love. In the Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava writings "this strictness has ... been frequently emphasised by the condition that a man must do completely away with his nature as a man and transform his nature to that of a woman before he takes the vow of love".[98] In this respect the Sahajiyās conform to the Gosvāmī concept that *jīva* (phenomenal being) being the manifestation of the *taṭastha śakti* (accidental power) of Kṛṣṇa is, after all, *prakṛti* (female) and Kṛṣṇa is the only male and hence the sole object of love. It is precisely at this point that the Sahajiyās come closest to *mañjarī sādhanā* despite their doctrinal divergences with the Gosvāmī system. This is suggested because *mañjarī sādhanā* is also a systematic exercise through intense mental discipline to stimulate in man the attitude of *prakṛti* and to shake off *puruṣābhimāna* (the pride as being male) as an essential condition for identifying himself with the devotional sentiments of the *mañjarīs*.

The Sahajiyās, at least a large section of them, had accepted the ideology of *mañjarī sādhanā*. The Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava mode of worship has been systematized by Mukundadāsa in the *Siddhānta-candrodaya*. Mukundadāsa was the disciple of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, which gives a theoretical interpretation in terms of the syncretic creed of the life of Caitanyadeva.[99] According to Narottamadāsa and the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *yogapīṭha* diagram, Kṛṣṇadāsa had achieved success in *mañjarī sādhanā*.[100] Several Vaiṣṇava *padas* (lyrics) pertaining to Sahajiyā doctrine have been quoted in the *Siddhānta-candrodaya* by way of illustration and explanation. Some of these *padas* indicate the transformation of the Sahajiyā mode of meditation in terms of *mañjarī sādhanā*.[101] A more clear evidence of the adoption of *mañjarī sādhanā* by the Sahajiyās may be found in some of the *padas* by Chhota Vidyāpati contained in the Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava text called *Rasarāja*. Chhota Vidyāpati unambiguously says that the meditator should try to place himself in the environment of Brindaban and follow the *gopis*; an attempt to realize *Sahaja* in his own person will inevitably take him to the worst of hells[102]. In another *pada* the poet says that Kṛṣṇa is the only male, he contains in him the essence of man. The worldly male should conceive himself as *prakṛti* (female) and seek the grace of Kṛṣṇa.[103]

Baghnapara was an important centre of Sahajiyā *Rasarāja sādhanā* led by the descendants of Banśībadana. But the Gosvāmīs of Baghnapara practise *mañjarī sādhanā* by adopting Anaṅgamanjarī as the *siddha deha*. Even the later Sahajiyā sects, such as the Sāhebdhanī, which emerged in the eighteenth century outside the sphere of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava system, adopted the *rāgānugā* way and the symbolism of *mañjarī sādhanā* as a means to transcend animal instincts.[104]

VI. *Epilogue*

Narottama and his colleagues reconciled the Gosvāmī system with the tradition of the *bhakti* movement in Bengal, particularly *Gaura-pāramyavāda*, which was one of the most important symbols of the regional Bengali culture and identity. The reconciliation was the crucial factor in the third and the final phase of the *bhakti* movement in Bengal. It provided the different groups of the *bhakti* movement with a theoretical and canonical base of the ideology of *bhakti*. On the other hand, it linked them with the mainstreams of Purāṇic Brāhmaṇism and Vaiṣṇavism and their pan-Indian dimensions. Besides the syncretic approach of Narottama and his colleagues offered the Sahajiyās the opportunity to integrate themselves with the main trend of the *bhakti* movement in Bengal. The Sahajiyā sects, as noted above, had a very large following among the common people, particularly in the lower strata of the society. Integration of the Sahajiyās consolidated the broad social base of the *bhakti* movement. The syncretic approach of Narottama and his colleagues essentially based on the Gosvāmī system provided the Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal with a standard version of the faith and practices which was acceptable to all. The Vaiṣṇavas belonging to the different groups did not merge to constitute a central organization in the

form of a church or a central authority as in the case of the Śrī or the Rāmānandī or the Vallabhācārī *sampradāya*, for instance. But the common acceptance by the different Vaiṣṇava groups of the modified version of the Gosvāmī system created a sense of community among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal who came to be known as Gauḍīya *sampradāya* after the name by which the followers of Caitanya were distinguished from the other Vaiṣṇava sects in the context of the Ganga valley and Orissa. *Niṣṭhā* (firm faith and deep attachment) to the canons and rituals of the faith as propounded by the Gosvāmī system gave rise to the *naiṣṭhika* category which represented the standard form of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal. Within this flourished the *rasika* (seekers of Kṛṣṇa as *Rasa*) Vaiṣṇavas, mostly Sahajiyā. They retained some of their original esoteric practices but at the same time functioned as the channel through which the influence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism spread on such esoteric sects as the Bāul, Kartābhajā and Sāhebdhanī.

The syncretic approach of the final phase of the *bhakti* movement sought to rehabilitate Caitanya as the supreme deity of the faith. But the effort was confined mostly to juxtapose both Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya as the *Paramatattva* without trying to explain the Caitanya phenomenon in terms of a canonical system. In the absence of a canonical interpretation of the *Gaura-pāramyavāda* the doctrine remained as an adjunct to the central focus of Kṛṣṇa. There was no attempt to systematize Caitanya worship in terms of theology and philosophy. As such, Caitanya's position as the source of supreme love continued to be ambiguous and more a matter of personal faith and experience than the central feature in a system of belief. As such Caitanya is an object of adoration in the part of devotion to Kṛṣṇa who only is the Supreme Being. From the early decades of the seventeenth century till the end of the nineteenth century a large number of Vaiṣṇava temples were built in Bengal. Built in the regional Bengali style these temples represent the continuity of a symbol of regional Bengali cultural identity in a stagnant architectural form. The major bulk of these temples are dedicated to the worship of Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu. Only a few of these temples were built for the worship of Caitanya.

The unique force of dynamism in Caitanya had inspired his associates to propound *Gaura-pāramyavāda* which became the epitome of the regional Bengali spirit of self-assertion. *Gaura-pāramyavāda* had cut across social hierarchy and had spread from the topmost level of the brāhmaṇa to the lowest level of the Caṇḍāla. Caitanya himself had taken initiative in projecting the *bhakti* movement of Bengal to north India and Orissa. Acting upon his advice the Gosvāmīs of Brindaban had built up a system of *bhakti* philosophy, namely, *Acintya-bhedābheda*, which was posed as an alternative to the existing systems of *bhakti* philosophy, namely, *Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda*, *Dvaitavāda*, *Dvaitādvaitavāda* and *Śuddhādvaitavāda*. This was an attempt to assert regional Bengali culture in the all-India context. But this attempt to measure upto the all-India dimensions had cost the regional Bengali culture its most important symbol, namely, the uniqueness of the figure of Caitanya. Under the influence of the growing preponderance of Kṛṣṇa *Gaura-pāramyavāda* faded into oblivion. But

the systematization of the faith of the Caitanya movement in the all-India context and propagation in Bengal of the Gosvāmī system through the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava creed ushered a new cultural environment in Bengal.

Bengal's cultural relations with the rest of India had waned considerably during the period of independent Sultanate (mid-thirteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries). During this time Bengal was practically isolated from north and south India. The isolation was political, economic and cultural. Caitanya sought to break the isolation in the cultural sphere. He had gone to Puri (Orissa) in 1510 and lived there till his demise in 1533. Caitanya's devotees in Bengal visited him in Puri regularly every year at the time of the *rathayātrā* festival. Owing to the Caitanya's long association with it Puri became the focus of Caitanya hagiology and a great centre of pilgrimage of the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas. Bengal had received both *Advaitavedānta* and *bhakti* philosophy. But till the sixteenth century it had made no contribution to the debate on *Advaita vedānta* versus *bhakti* which had been going on in India since the eighth century. Caitanya was the first among the Bengalis to enter with fresh ideas into this all-India intellectual and spiritual exercise. His followers, the Gosvāmīs of Brindaban, had developed his ideas into a distinctive philosophical system of *Acintya-bhedābheda*. The presence of the Gosvāmīs in Brindaban induced the young Bengali intellectuals to migrate there. After the establishment of the Gosvāmī system in Bengal, Brindaban became the greatest centre of pilgrimage of the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas. To the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas it was a great act of merit to visit the three holy places of the faith, Brindaban in Uttar Pradesh, Puri in Orissa and Nabadweep in Bengal.

The Bengali Vaiṣṇava pilgrimage to Brindaban and Puri appears to have constituted the channel through which the influence of Rajasthani miniature painting and Orissan stone and wood carving and miniature painting had reached Bengal. Rajasthani and Orissan elements made very significant contributions to the evolution to maturity of the terracotta temple sculpture and miniature manuscript cover (*pātā*) paintings of Bengal both of which had flourished mainly under the aegis of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava creed.[105] During his sojourn in Brindaban Narottamadāsa had learnt north Indian classical *dhrupad* song. Coming back to Bengal Narottama evolved a new style of singing *līlākīrtan* by adjusting the indigenous *kāvya* songs which had stagnated with the *śāstrīya dhrupad*. Subsequently new styles of *līlākīrtan* song had developed on the basis of the north Indian *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī* songs.[106]

The introduction of the Gosvāmī system and the propagation of the syncretic Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava creed had sparked off considerable theological and metaphysical debates and speculations among the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas. The tradition of debate and speculation continued through the process of adjustment of the Sahajiyā tenets with the broad framework of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. It is an unique feature of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* that the debates and speculations had percolated down to the level of the common devotees. The emphasis of the *bhakti* movement on the inherent capacity of the individual to attain *premabhakti* had aroused a strong sense of self-confidence among the

Vaiṣṇavas in general. Caitanya repeatedly said that any individual irrespective of his or her social standing can attain on his own *prema*, the highest level of spiritual experience by means of simple unritualistic *kīrtan* even without the help of *guru* and *śāstrīya* learning. Self-reliance in the *sādhanā* for *bhakti* had become deeply entrenched in the *bhakti* movement. The modifications in the faith of the *bhakti* movement naturally interested the common devotees in the broad-based social milieu of the *bhakti* movement and its successor Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. There existed among the Vaiṣṇavas an urge to know for themselves the Gosvāmī system and the debates and speculations that followed from it. This explains the strong tradition among the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas of reading *sādhanā nivandhas*, Bengali translations of the Gosvāmī texts and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and of debating the methods and aims of meditation. The tradition still persists. A phenomenally large number of eighteenth and nineteenth century manuscripts of the various Vaiṣṇava *sādhanā nivandhas*, Bengali translation of Gosvāmī texts and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* have been found in the possession of the lower caste Vaiṣṇavas.

It is these people who gather in large numbers to attend the performance of *līlākīrtan* songs. *Līlākīrtan* narratives have two basic components, namely, (a) sixteenth-seventeenth century Vaiṣṇava *padas* which represent the highest level of excellence in pre-modern Bengali literature and explicate the theology, metaphysics and *rasas* (devotional sentiments) of the Gosvāmī system and (b) quotations of *ślokas* from the Gosvāmī texts. The music of *līlākīrtan*, as noted above, is basically classical. *Līlākīrtan* songs are performed at a stretch for three to four hours or even more. The audience of the *līlākīrtan* song which represents the social milieu of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism consists of the gathering of the different strata of society including the lowest. It is important that such an audience which assemble in an open congregation of *līlākīrtan* quietly and patiently listen to the song till the end. Attending *līlākīrtan* song is considered to be an act of merit. This is, no doubt, a reason why people attend *līlākīrtan* song. But these people had in their culture certain degree of intellectual interest and the artists among them did possess the capacity to assimilate in their technique the idioms of Rajasthani and Orissan art. *Līlākīrtan* stimulated the links of these people with the *mārga* level of culture.

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2. Dineschandra Sen, *Bangabhāsā O Sāhitya* (in Bengali), 4th edition, Calcutta, 1920, pp. 121-22, 158- 60; Sukumar Sen, *Bānglā Sāhityer Itihās* (in Bengali), vol. I, part 1, 3rd edn, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 137-38, 175-76.
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padas have been referred to below (see *infra*, notes 56, 57, 58). For longer narratives relating to this subject, see *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (in Bengali) by Brindābanadāsa, Upendranath Mukhopadhyaya, ed., reprint of the 4th Bāsumati Sāhitya Mandir edn, Calcutta, n.d., II. 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19; III.5; *Caitanya-mangala* (in Bengali) by Locanadāsa, Bhagabāndās Kāvya-Vyākaṇa-tirtha, ed., Nabadweep (Bengali Era 1388 = AD 1981), II. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10. *Caitanya-mangala* (in Bengali) by Jayānanda, Bimanbehari Majumdar and Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay, ed., Calcutta, 1971, III. 4, 22.

5. *CB*, I. 8, p. 57-58, II. 23, p. 225; *Caitanya-mangala* by Jayānanda, II. 30, 4-16.
6. *CB*, II. 6, p. 131, 10, p. 156, III. 3, p. 286, III. 5, p. 303.
7. *CB*, III. 5, 6, 7; *Caitanya-mangala* by Jayānanda, IX, pp. 158-63.
8. For detailed introduction to the esoteric sects, see Shashibushan Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 3rd edn, reprint, Calcutta, 1976, pp. 3-34, 51-109, 191-205; Ray, op. cit., pp. 635-98.
9. Narahari's Sahajiyā inclination is clear from the *padas* composed by him. In his *padas* Narahari frequently uses the Sahajiyā concepts of *rasa*, *rasika*, *svarūpa*, *sahaja-svarūpa*, *āropa* and the Buddhist Sahajiyā concepts of *sukha* and *vajra*. These *padas* are included in the *Kṛṣṇapadāmṛta-sindhu*, pp. 134-35 and Manindramohan Bāsu (compiled and annotated), *Sahajiyā Sāhitya* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1932, pp. 61-2, 65, 74, 90.
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11. *Vivarta-vilāsa* by Akincanadāsa, Bidyaratna Jantra edn, Calcutta, BE 1311 = AD 1904-05, I.2. See also Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Caitanya-chariter Upādān* (in Bengali), 2nd edn, Calcutta, 1959, p. 536. For Svarūpa Dāmodara's Sahajiyā connections, see Sukumar Sen (1975), op. cit., p. 43.
12. *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭakam* (in Sanskrit) by Kavikarṇapūra, Jibānanda Vidyāsāgar, ed., Saraswati Jantra edn, Calcutta, 1885, VII.2.
13. *Śrīkṛṣṇacaitanya-caritāmṛtam* (in Sanskrit) by Murāri Gupta (usually known as *Kaḍchā*), 3rd Nalini Press edn., Calcutta Gauravda 445 = AD 1931-32, II.2.8-10, 4.4, 5.14, 9.18-23, 12.12-17; *CB*, II.6, pp. 129-30, II.9, pp. 146-47; *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, (in Sanskrit) by Kavikarṇapūra (usually referred to as *Mahākāvya*), Radharaman Jantra edn, Baharampur, 1885, VI.26, VII.32-35; *pada* by Govinda Ghosh in *Gaurapadatarangiṇī* compiled by Jagadbandhu Bhadra, Mrinalkanti Ghosh, ed., 2nd Bangiya Sāhitya Parisat edn, Calcutta, BE 1341= AD1934-35, p. 150.
14. *Kaḍchā*, II.10. 16-20; *CB*, III.10, pp. 331- 7.
15. *Kaḍchā*, I.12.19.
16. *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* (in Sanskrit) by Prabodhananda Sarasvatī, Anādimohan Gosvāmī, ed., Gaudiya Vaishnava Sammilani edn, Calcutta, BE 1360 = AD 1953-54, *śloka*, 58.
17. *Caitanya-candrodaya*, I.7.28; *Mahākāvya*, I.8.17.
18. In the opening section of *mangalā-caraṇa and līlāsūtra-varṇana* of the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* Brindābanadāsa explicity calls Caitanya *Maheśvara* (Supreme Being). *Nārāyaṇa* (Viṣṇu) and *Bhagavān* (God). This sets the tone of the entire text which explicates Caitanya's identity with the Absolute Reality. Similarly in the opening verse of *Caitanya-mangala* Locanadāsa describes Caitanya as being *pūrṇābatīrṇaḥ* (full incarnation of God) and describes the life of the Master in this light.
19. Susil Kumar De, *The Early History of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, 2nd edn, Calcutta, 1961, pp. 124, 230-31.
20. *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (in Sanskrit) by Kavikarṇapūra, 5th Radharaman Jantra edn, Baharampur, Mursidabad, BE 1929 = AD1912-13, *śloka* 10-11.
21. See, for example, *Śrī Śrī Pada-kalpataru* compiled by Vaiṣṇavadāsa, Satis Chandra Ray, ed., Calcutta, BE 1304 = AD 1897-98, *pada* by Narahari Sarkar (*pada* nos. 307, 316, 408, 421, 1746, 1902, 2259), Sibananda Sena (nos. 2127, 2355), Paramānanda Sena (no. 2120). Also *padas* by Bāsu Ghosh in *Bāsu Ghosher Padāvalī* (in Bengali), Malabika Chaki, ed.,

Bangiya Sāhitya Parisad edn, Calcutta, BE 1368 = AD 1961, *pada* nos. 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 27, 28, 35, 38, 44, 56, 63.

22. The doctrine was propagated in the Bengali and Sanskrit works by the associates and followers of Caitanya but it was formulated in the Sanskrit works of Murāri Gupta, Prabodhānanda Sarasvati and Paramānanda Sena, who is more well-known as Kavikarṇapūra. These works have been referred to above. See also Majumdar, op. cit., pp. 112, 175-79; De, op. cit., p. 229.
23. *Kaḍchā*, IV. 14. 12-4; *Narottama-vilāsa* (in Bengali) by Narahari Chakravarti, Calcutta, BE 1262 = AD 1855- 56, III, pp. 45, 51, V, pp. 76, 80. Sixteenth century and seventeenth century Caitanya images are still found in Kulia, Guptipara, Kalna, Nabadweep, Katwa and Śrikhaṇḍa.
24. Majumdar, op. cit., pp. 112, 435. 25. Sukumar Sen, op. cit., p. 401.
26. See *supra* note. 10. *Bansi-sikṣa* was composed in 1716-17. Divided into four *ullāsas* (chapters) the text gives a detailed discourse on the *Rasarāja Doctrine and Bansībandana's position as the enjoyed through ullāsa*, I, II, and III and the half of the fourth. See Premadāsa, *Bansī-śikṣā*, Nemaichand Goswami ed., Swastik Mudranalaya edn, Calcutta, n.d.
27. For *Gaura-nāgara* and *Nadiyā-nāgari* doctrines, see De, op. cit., pp. 65-66; introduction to *Caitanya-mangala* by Locanadāsa, op. cit., pp. iv-v.
28. *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* (in Sanskrit) by Prabodhananda Saraswati, *śloka* 132.
29. See, for example, in *PK padas* by Narahari Sarkar (no. 103), Gobinda Ghosh (no. 1597); *padas* in *Bāsu Ghoser Padāvali*. nos. 34, 70, 74, 75, 76, 78-106; *pada* by Jadunandan Chakravarti in *Bhaktiratnākara* (in Bengali), by Narahari Chakravarti, Nandalāl *Vidyāsāgar*, ed., Gaudiya Mission edn, Calcutta, 1960, XII.2819-23, 2851-57. Locanadāsa composed the *Caitanya-mangala* with the specific intention of vindicating the *nāgarabhāva* doctrine.
30. *CB*, III. 5, pp. 303-14; 6, pp. 314-17; *Caitanya-mangala* by Jayānanda, III. 7.
31. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (in Bengali) by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Nityananda Goswami, ed., 3rd Sulabh Library edn, Calcutta, Caitanyāvda 441 = AD 1927, II.23, p. 261.
32. For biographical details of the six Brindaban Gosvāmis, see Nareschandra Jana, *Brindābaner Chhay Gosvāmi* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1970.
33. For comprehensive introduction to the works of the Gosvāmis, see De, op. cit., chs. IV, V, VI.
34. *CB*, II. 13, p. 169; 24, p. 230.
35. *CB*, II. 3, p. 119; III. 7, pp. 317-18; 8, pp. 323, 325.
36. *CB*, II. 24, pp. 228, 230-31.
37. Brindabānadāsa, who was an ardent follower of Nityānanda, has condemned *Gaura-nāgaravāda* (*CB*, I.10, p. 78). Narahari was one of the closest associates of Caitanya. But Brindabānadāsa does not refer to Narahari and Kavikarṇapūra practically ignores his role. Possibly this is due to their aversion to the *Gaura-nāgara* doctrine.
38. The split in the *bhakti* movement and the consequent flux is indicated by the *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* (*śloka* 38). For details, see Niradbehari Nath, *Narottamadāsa O Tanhar Rachanāvali* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1975, pp. 123-31 in the *Ālocana* section.
39. There were fifty-eight poets among the associates of Caitanya all of whom have composed Bengali *padas* or Sanskrit *stotras* on the Master. More prominent among these poets are Narahari Sarkar, Bāsu Ghosh, Gobinda Ghosh, Rāmānanda Bāsu, Śivānanda Sena and Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī. Several biographical works both in Sanskrit and Bengali were produced by the associates of Caitanya or their disciples. They include the following. Sanskrit: (a) *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛtam* by Murāri Gupta, (b) *Caitanya-caritāmṛta (mahākāvya)* by Kavikarṇapūra (c) *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭakam* by Kavikarṇapūra. Bengali: (a) *Caitanya-bhāgavata* by Brindabanadāsa, (b) *Gaurāṅga-vijaya* by Cuḍamaṇidāsa, (c) *Caitanya-mangala* by Locanadāsa, (d) *Caitanya- mangala* by Jayānanda.

40. Paramānanda Sena, popularly known as Kavikarṇapūra, was a junior contemporary of Caitanya and the son of Sivananda Sena. He was a man of considerable literary and scholarly telents and a versatile author. He has written extensively on the life and teachings of Caitanya and on the faith of the *bhakti* movement. These include the *Mahākāvya* and the *Nāṭaka* referred to above, *Alaṃkāra-kausṭubha (*on devotional sentiments*), Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (hagiology), *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū* (interpretation of *Kṛṣṇalīlā)* and a commentary on the *Śrīmadbhāgavata*. Karṇapūra sought to systematize the faith with in a theoretical framework. The only other attempt towards theoretical discourse is the *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-bhajanāmṛta*, a theological text by Narahari Sarkar. Kavikarṇapūra's works do not appear to have received sufficient organizational support from the adherents of the *bhakti* movement and were completely overshadowed by the works of the Brindaban Gosvāmīs which provided the canons of the Bengal Vaiṣṇavism.
41. For the ancestry of Sanātana and Rūpa, see the family history given by Jīva Gosvāmī at the end of his *Laghu-Vaiṣṇava-toṣini*. According to the *Bhakti-ratnākara* Sanātana and Rūpa had set up a colony of Bhaṭṭa (Karnāṭ) Brāhmaṇas near Ramkeli in the vicinity of the city of Gaur where they lived while serving under the Sultan. Their social and religious interactions were confined to these Brāhmaṇa families (*BR*, I. 592-95).
42. See in *PK padas* by Murārī Gupta (no. 749), Narahari Sarkar (nos. 103, 307, 316, 408, 421, 853, 1746, 1902), *padas* by Bāsu Ghosh in *Bāsu Ghosher Padāvalī*, nos. 42, 45, 46, 57; *Caitanya-maṅgala* by Locanadāsa, II. 13. 637-39, Appendix, *pada* nos. 8, 9.
43. *Kaḍchā*, II. 4.4, 5.14; III. 2.9, 19-23; *CB*, II. 3, p. 115; 6, pp. 129-30; 9, pp. 146-47; 19, pp. 198; 20, pp. 204; *pada* by Bāsu Ghosh in *PK*, nos.936, 1368; *pada* by Govinda Ghosh in *Guurupada- taraṅginī*, p. 160; *padas* by Bāsu Ghosh in *Bāsu Ghoser padāvalī*, nos.16-18, 23, 24, 27, 28, 35, 38, 44, 56, 63.
44. See *supra*, notes 15, 16, 17, 18, 21 and 43.
45. *CB*, II.6, p. 131; II.10, p. 156; III. 4, p. 286; III.5, p.303.
46. Jana, op. cit., p. 150. 47. *Kaḍchā*, III.15.14-16. 48. Ibid., IV.1.15-17.
49. See in *PK padas* by Narahari Sarkar (nos. 799, 820, 832, 840, 1643); *padas* by Bāsu Ghosh in *Bāsu Ghoser Padāvalī* nos. 127, 143.
50. *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* (in Sanskrit) by Prabodhānand Saraswati, *śloka* 13, 109; *pada* by Narahari Sarkar in *PK*, no. 2259; *padas* by Bāsu Ghosh in *Bāsu Ghosher Padāvalī*, nos.1, 13; *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* (in Bangali) by Kṛṣṇadeva Kavirāja, I. 8, p. 137. Raghunāthadāsa Gosvāmī also believed in this theory (see De, op. cit., p. 425).
51. As indicated above, Caitanya demonstrated *Rādhā-bhāva* before he became a *sanyāsī*. But according to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja *Rādhā-bhāva* in the Master sharply accentuated after his long discourse with Rāy Rāmānanda who was convinced of Caitanya's identity with Rādhā (*Caitanya caritāmṛta*, I.8).
52. For a short introduction to the Vaiṣṇava sects, see D.C. Sircar, "Vaishnavism" in R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The History and Culture of the Indian People: The Struggle for Empire*, 2nd edn, Bombay, 1966, pp. 435-42; R.C. Majumdar, "Religion" in R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The History and Culture of the Indian People: The Delhi Sultanate*, 2nd edn, Bombay, 1967, pp. 557-72.
53. De, op. cit., pp. 421-47.
54. *CB*, II. 1, p. 95; 12, p. 165; 18, pp. 189, 191-94; pp. 304-5, 307; *Caitanya-maṅgala* by Locanadāsa, II. 434-41, 448-63; *padas* by Jadunandana Cakravartī, *BR*, XII, 3054-62, 3077-82; *pada* by Rāmānanda Bāsu in *BR*, XII, 3426-29.
55. *Caitanya-candrodaya*, I, 30.
56. *Caitanya-maṅgala* by Jayānanda, III.22. 2-6.
57. De, op. cit., pp. 174-77, 369-77. 58. Ibid., p. 178.
59. *CB*,I.1, pp. 1-5; 12, p. 92; II.13, p. 227; *pada* by Bāsu Ghosh in *Bāsu Ghosher Padāvalī*, no. 54; *Caitanya-maṅgala* by Locanadāsa, II.4. 205-12.
60. See in *PK pada* by Narahari Sarkar (no. 2122), *pada* by Paramānanda Gupta (no. 2120); *pada* by Jadunandana Chakravartī in *BR*, XII. 2803-07, 3054-62.

61. Vide *supra*, note 29.
62. *CB*, II.5, p. 125; 10, p. 16; 17, p. 188; III. 5, p. 303; 6, p. 316; *padas* by Bāsu Ghosh in *Bāsu Ghosher Padāvalī*, nos. 45, 63.
63. *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā, śloka* 30 ff.
64. This is the general socio-religious attitude of the text. For specific references, see summary of the text in De, op. cit., pp. 411-520.
65. *Haribhakti-vilāsa* by Gopala Bhaṭṭa, Puridas Mahasay ed., Sacinath Ray Caturdharin edn, (Aloya, Mymensingh, 1946), XI.746, 762-65.
66. *Haribhakti-vilāsa*, I. 47-52.
67. *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* (in Bengali), II.19, pp. 221-26; II.20, pp. 229-62.
68. Ibid. (in Bengali), I.1, p. 2.
69. De, op. cit., pp. 93-4, 100, 427; B. Majumdar, op. cit., pp. 382-84.
70. Caitanya occasionally demonstrated *Rādhā-bhava* in Nabadweep (see *supra*, note 43). This indicates his inclination to the *rāgānugā* way in terms of *madhura rasa* from the early stage of his religious career.
71. Jana, op. cit., pp. 64-5, 88-9.
72. *Prema-vilāsa* (in Bengali) by Nityānandadāsa, 2nd Radharaman Jantra edn, Baharampur, Murshidabad, BE 1318 = AD 1911-12, XII, pp. 143-60; *NV*, III, pp. 40-1. For date, see Nath, op. cit., p. 16; Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay, *Chaitanyadeva* (in Bengali), (Calcutta, 1984), p. 90.
73. *Prema-vilāsa*, XII, pp. 134-43; *NV*, II, pp. 38-9.
74. *NV*, III, p. 41 *Śrī Śrī Śyāmānanda Prakāśa* (in Bengali) by Kṛṣṇacaraṇadāsa, Gopala-Govindānanda Deva-Gosvami, ed., Śyāmānandī Gadi edn, Gopiballabhpur, Mediniput, BE 1384 = AD 1957-58, IV. 145-49, V, VI, VII, VIII, XI, XII, XV, XVI.
75. *BR*, VII. 204-26, pp. 159-93; VIII. 506-637; IX. 260-387, pp. 495-575; X, 89-187, pp. 292-329; *NV*, IX, p. 188.
76. *NV*, III, pp. 49-55; IV, pp. 59-73; V, pp. 74-83.
77. Nath, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
78. *NV*, IV, pp. 97, 100, 104, 105, 106, 109, 135, 136, 178.
79. Ibid., VII, p. 115. 80. Ibid., pp. 114-15.
81. For example, see *pada* nos. 67 to 77 in *Bāsu Ghosher Padāvalī*.
82. Swami Prajñānānanda, *Padāvalī Kīrtaner Itihās*, I, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 34-5, 119.
83. This has been clearly explicated by Jayānanda in his *Caitanya-maṅgala*, III.22. 2-6.
84. B. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 564.
85. *NV*, VII, p. 118-21; *Prema-vilāsa* specifically says that in the Kheturi festival songs on Chaitanya were followed by songs on Kṛṣṇa (XIX, p. 318).
86. *Nāma-cintāmaṇi* by Narottamadāsa in Nath, op. cit., pp. 527-28, 531.
87. *NV*, VIII, p. 137.
88. Ibid., VI, p. 90; IX, pp. 189-90; X, pp. 193-4, 197- 204, 213-14.
89. For Śyāmānanda's caste, see *BR*, I.351-54.
90. Nath, op. cit., p. 144.
91. Nath, op. cit., pp. 94-5; *Prema-vilāsa*, VI, pp. 65-6.
92. Nath, op. cit., pp. 95-117.
93. *Gaura-gaṇoddesa-dīpikā, śloka* 180-207; Nath, op. cit., p. 95.
94. Ibid., pp. 102-17; *Rāgamālā* by Narottamadāsa in ibid., pp. 633-43.
95. Dasgupta, op. cit., pp. 113-34. 96. Ibid., p. 121.
97. Ibid., pp. 120-22. 98. Ibid. 99. Ibid., p. 140.
100. Sukumar Sen, "Śrī Khaṇḍer Sampradāy O Chaṇḍīdās" (in Bengali), in *Bichitra Sāhitya*, (Calcutta, 1956), p. 129.
101. Nath, op. cit., pp. 110-11; Rāgamālā by Narottamadāsa in ibid., p. 639.

102. See, for example, the *pada* by Rāy-Śekhara in the *Siddhanta-candrodaya* (pp. 157-58) as quoted in Sukumar Sen, (1956), op. cit., p. 122.
103. Sukumar Sen, "Śrīkhaṇḍer Sampradāy O Chaṇḍidāsa" in *Vaiṣṇavīya Nibandha*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 217-18.
104. Ibid., p. 218.
105. Sudhir Chakravarti, "Maner Manuser Gabhir Nirjan Pathe" (in Bengali), *Ekṣan*, Saradiya, BE 1391 = AD 1984, p. 19; Sudhir Chakravarti, *Sāhebdhani Sampradāya O Tader Gan* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1985, p. 95.
106. Hitesranjan Sanyal, "The Nature of Peasant Culture in India: A Study of the Pat Painting and Clay Sculpture of Bengal", *Folk* (Copenhagen), vol. 26, 1984, pp. 124-73.
107. Khagendranath Mitra, *Kīrtan* (in Bengali), Calcutta, BE 1352 = AD 1945, pp. 25-33.

15

The Mughal Mints in Bihar

QEYAMUDDIN AHMAD

The existing collections of coins of the Sulṭāns and the Mughal rulers of India are quite large in number and many of these have been examined in detail. The metrological and numismatic aspects have so far received greater attention, and in more recent years significant attempts have been made[1] for a quantitative analysis of the issues of some Mughal mints to draw conclusions about import of bullion, rise in price-level, etc.

Other aspects, such as an integrated account of the history of some mints, their organizational set-up, functions and wages of different workers, special mint-marks, and special issues, if any, have not yet been adequately examined. The fact that some mints were directly or indirectly connected with certain industries, particularly gold and silver based industries, such as the famous *zarī* industry of Benares, is not generally realized, and this aspect is often taken as outside the purview of numismatic studies. Further, apart from the normal type coins issued from the mints there were special issues from some mints which have a bearing upon the general history of the area. Any systematic account of the mints in a Mughal *ṣūba* has to attend to these different aspects. An attempt has been made here to present a case-study of the Mughal mints in Bihar along these lines, and the paper has accordingly been divided into the following sections: (I) Introductory, in which attention has been drawn to some general points, often overlooked, viz., the symbolic and communicational value of the coins, and the significance of money as a medium of exchange, (II) history of the establishment and working of mints situated in Bihar as at present constituted, (III) organizational set-up, the workers, their wages, etc., (IV) some rare coins, and (V) functions of mints other than the coining of money.

I. *Introductory*

The early Muslim Arab Caliph-rulers had initially adopted the coins of the Byzantine and Persian types found current in the territories conquered by them. They modified and developed the system subsequently and in course of time a distinct system of coinage was developed by the early Arab[2] and Turkish ruling dynasties. By the time of the establishment of Delhi Sulṭanat the Muslim coinage had fully developed. Some of its distinguishing features, such as a multi-metallic currency characterized by strict maintenance of purity of metal and standard of weight, the issuing of fractional units of the standard coins, and, more particularly, the attaching of a very great politico-legal importance to the right of

issuing coins, are to be found in the case of the currency system of the Sulṭanat and Mughal periods too.

The right of getting the *khuṭba'* read, and coins struck, in his name was one of the earliest most cherished prerogatives[3] of a Muslim ruler of the medieval period. The first thing any contender for power did on succeeding in his bid was to assume these two powers. The phrase *khuṭba' wa sikkā jārī kardand* (got the *khuṭba'* read and coins issued in his name) frequently occurs in the Persian chronicles recounting the attainment of power, smoothly or violently, by different individuals during the Sulṭanat and Mughal periods. With the two very unusual exceptions, of Humāyun in a rather expansive and eccentric mood conferring on Niẓām, the water-carrier who had saved him from drowning at the end of the battle of Chausa, the right to issue coins, and of Jahāngīr passing the unprecedented order of Nūrjahān's name being minted on the coins, we find this prerogative being exclusively enjoyed and vigorously protected. Any violation of it was an open and most serious challenge to the established authority and invited immediate suppressive measures.

In a period during which the means of communication between the ruler and the ruled were limited and undeveloped, the public announcement of one's name in the largely attended Friday congregational prayers in towns and villages, and the circulation of coins bearing the ruler's name, were two of the most effective symbols of sovereignty which everyone could hear and see for himself.

A very interesting glimpse of this aspect of mints and coins in medieval India is provided by a contemporary Portuguese account[4] about the establishment of the mint in Goa (1510) issuing Portuguese coins. It appears that Timoja, a Hindu chief of Onor (Honavar) who had strained relations with the Muslim chief of Goa, incited Albuquerque to conquer Goa. After its occupation, Timoja led a delegation of some Hindus and Muslims to the Portuguese governor. The men represented that due to lack of sufficient coins in the area trade transactions were hampered, and requested the governor to issue new coins, and also to raise the price of gold and silver to stop their export.[5] The governor was hesitant, as it was a 'novel proceeding', and sought for the orders from the king of Portugal. Meanwhile, the delegation called upon the governor again, and was also persuaded by his advisors that the new currency would bring credit to the name of the Portuguese king and bring to him 'added renown and profit'. Subsequently, probably after receiving the king's order, the governor ordered his goldsmiths to make a trial of the 'silver of the Mohammadan kings' and having found that the silver was of the same intrinsic value as of the Portuguese coins he appointed Tristao de Ga to be the Treasurer of the Goa Mint, and 'money in gold, silver and copper was forthwith coined'.

What is more relevant in the present context is that the opening of the mint was announced by a public 'proclamation', which was read out to the people throughout the city, '*as was the native custom*' (emphasis added). The royal flag, trumpet and kettledrums were ordered to be assembled along with all the men in the fleet, and led by Tristao, the Treasurer of the Mint, the procession went round the city proclaiming the issuing of a new coinage, and at each

proclamation quantities of the new money were scatterred in handfuls. The crowd which had assembled was 'very naturally great' and it was 'eager to catch as many pieces' as it could.

It may be remarked that although we do not have any such detailed account of the opening of a new mint in the contemporary Indo-Persian chronicles it is reasonable to conclude that some such practice was in vogue. The Portuguese account specifically states that this was the 'native custom'. The basic idea obviously was to convey to the local people the fact that a new ruler, or a new ruling dynasty, had come to power.

It would thus be evident that the mint was something more than an administrative department. Its working had a wider legal, political and communicational dimension. Additionally, on its successful working depended the smooth running of almost all the other departments. In a virtually unnoticed passage of the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* relating to the Imperial Mint, Abū-l Faẓl makes the following incisive remarks on the basic, all-round, utility and importance of money as a medium of exchange, the many good qualities of gold to which 'just kings' have paid attention and for minting which into coins they had 'erected mints'. He writes:

"As the successful working of the mint increases the treasure, and is the source of despatch for every department, I shall mention a few details.

"The inhabitants of the towns and the country perform their transactions by means of money. Every man uses it according to the extent of his necessities. . . . It is absolutely necessary for the continuance of the human race, as men obtain by money their food and clothing . . . . Moreover, money is required, as our furniture and utensils break; they last in no case very long. But money does last long, on account of the strength and compactness of its material, and even a little of it may produce much. It enables men to travel. How difficult would it be to carry provisions for several days, let alone for several months or years.[6]

"By the help of God's goodness this excellent precious metal (gold) has come to the shore of existence, and filled the store of life without much labour on the part of man. . . . Gold has many qualities: it possesses softness, a good taste, and smell. Its component parts are nearly equal[7] in weight, and the marks of the four elements are visible in its properties. . . . Nor can any of the four elements injure it; for it does not burn in the fire; it remains unaffected by air; retains for ages its appearance although kept in water; and does not get altered when buried in the ground, whereby gold is distinguished from the other metals.... To render it service, God has allowed silver and brass to come into use, thus creating additional means for the welfare of man. Hence just kings and energetic rulers have paid much attention to these metals, and erected mints, where their properties may be thoroughly studied."

II. *The Mints in Bihar*

There is a reference to the setting up of a mint in Bihar almost immediately after the establishment of Turkish rule in the area in 1203.[8] Minhāj-i Sirāj writes that Bakhtiyār Khaljī got the *khuṭba'* read, and coins struck, and also established

thana and *madrasā* in his dominion.[9] Ferishta more specifically writes that Bakhtiyār Khaljī issued coins in Bihar.[10] No coin of his time has, however, come down to us. What is more surprising, for a period of over a century after Bakhtiyār Khaljī's death (1206) we do not get any reference in the chronicles[11] to the setting-up of a mint in Bihar, nor do we have any coin from a Bihar mint covering that period. This long gap in the evidence, literary or numismatic, is broken by the account of Mulla Taqiyah,[12] the 16th century historian-traveller who passed through Bihar on his way to Bengal and who has noted in his travel diary the establishment of a mint in Tughlaqpūr *'urf* (alias) Tirhut, or Darbhanga, during the reign of Muḥammad bin Tughlaq (1325-51). This reference is backed up by a coin issued from the mint.[13] The coin bears the mint-name Tughlaqpur *'urf* Tirhut and is dated AH 731. It belongs to the famous token-coins series and bears the distinctive legend:

> *min'aṭāus Sulṭān faqad 'aṭaur Raḥmān, muhr shud tankā rā'ij dar ruzgār, banda'-i umeedwār Muḥammad Tughlaq.* [Eng. tr. He who obeys the Sovereign, obeys the merciful one (God). This *tanka'* is sealed current in the reign of Muḥammad Tughlaq, the slave hopeful (of God's mercy).]

Attention has been drawn to a gold coin dated AH 761 (1359-60) issued by Fatḥ Khān during the reign of Fīroz Shah (1351-88)[14] of which the mint-name has been read as Panta, and it has been taken to mean Patna.[15] But, to begin with, the reading of the mint-name as Panta is by no means certain. The mint-name column in the catalogue concerned has been left undeciphered. Moreover, as the author-writer concerned[16] has himself wondered, it is 'questionable' as to whether Patna existed as an important town at that time.

Again, as during the period following Bakhtiyār Khaljī's death, there is a long gap in the evidence, literary or numismatic, about mints in Bihar after Muḥammad bin Tughlaq's reign. It is virtually certain that there must have been mints in Bihar during this long period. As we know, Tirhut and Bihar were constituted as administrative units as early as the reign of Iltutmish (1210-36) and later on, Bihar is recorded as one of the 'provinces' of the empire of Muḥammad bin Tughlaq. It can reasonably be assumed that the area had a mint, like some of the other administrative units.

Sher Shāh's close association with Bihar and the specific mention of the transfer of the provincial capital from Bihar Sharif to Patna by him is recorded by the author of *Tārikh- i Dā'ūdi*,[17] but he does not mention anything about a mint also having been set up at the time.

Sher Shah's close interest in the reform of the currency system is well known and we have a large number of coins issued from the numerous units of his empire. None however from the Patna mint is available.

We are on the firmer ground for the period after 1577-78, as the *Akbar Nāmah* recording the events of the 22nd Divine Year (1577-78) states that Akbar held important discussions 'about the affairs of the empire' at a meeting of 'the privy council' attended by Shah Manṣūr, Rājā Todar Mal and Muẓaffar Khan. Among the matters decided upon was the reorganization of the mints. The mints which were under the charge of *chaudhuries* were put under the 'directorship' of

Khwāja Abdus Ṣamad *Shīrīn Qalam*, the famous calligraphist. Their supervision seems to have been decentralized, for thereafter the appointment of different persons in charge of mints at Lahore, Bengal, Jaunpur, Gujarat and Patna is recorded.[18] The Patna mint was put under the charge of Āṣaf Khan.[19] Actually, it was not a case of the establishment of a new mint. As stated above, a mint was already working since the time of Sulaimān Karrāni (1565-72).

The mint was quite active since the conquest of Bihar by Akbar (1574) till practically the very end of Mughal rule. Some details about the different types of the Patna coins of Mughal emperors, including some rare issues, their versified legends, the honorific titles used for the Patna mint, its special mint-mark, etc. are available.[20] Thus, for example, we find that for Akbar's reign, after the early issues[21] of AH 983-87 (1575-77 to 1579-80) there is some gap, and the *Ilāhī* era coins appear from after AH1005 (1596-97). Copper issues are scarce but not unknown. Of Jahāngīr, both gold and silver coins are available, the latter in plenty. Some of these bear the following legend:

سکہ زد در شہر پٹنہ خسرو عالم پناہ
شاہ نورالدین ابن اکبر بادشاہ

[Eng. tr. 1. Struck coin in the city of Patna, by the Khusraw, the Refuge of the Universe; 2. Shāh Nūru'd Dīn, son of Akbar *Bādshāh*.]

The coins bearing Nūrjahān's name are scarce, but we have some issued from the Patna mint.

In accordance with the re-naming of Patna as 'Aẓīmābād in 1704 the mint too came to be styled 'Aẓīmābād. Coins bearing this new mint name are available from AH 1117 (1705-06) onwards,[22] but a few coins using the old name Patna are also known. As regards the honorific titles, the gold coin of Akbar, dated AH 984, mentioned above, bears the simple designation, *Dāru'l Ẓarb* (seat of the mint) Patna. During Farrukhsiyar's reign (1712-19) we find the title *Mustaqaru'l Mulk* (resting place of the kingdom) being used. On a coin of Aḥmad Shāh we find for the first time the mint-mark ﷺ for used on the reverse side, to the left of '*julūs* 6', which serves to distinguish later Mughal coins of 'Aẓīmābād.[23]

The last phase of history of the Patna mint[24] (1772-96) is covered by the early administration of the East India Company. It was characterized by a short closure (1772), re-opening (1775) and final closure (1796).[25] When the Company took over the administration there were four mints in Bengal situated at Dacca, Murshidabad, Calcutta and Patna. The coins of these different mints differed in value due, partly, to differences in fineness and weight. To this was added the problem of the so-called *Sikkā* and *Sanaut* rupees. The former was the appellation given to the coins of the reigning king, and official payments including that of land revenue were made in it. Later, the name was given to the rupees which happened to be current at a given time. Even the coins of the reigning king turned out to be *Sanaut* after some time, generally three years. They were exchangeable with some discount, or *batta*.

Repeated attempts by Warren Hastings (and since earlier) to bring about a uniformity of standard in the coinage had failed, and he had abolished the Dacca and Patna mints (1772) in an attempt to lessen the growing confusion of a variety of exchange rates. The winding-up was short-lived and we find the mint working again after a short interval.

As early as March 1775, the Patna Council had started writing to the President-in-Council at Calcutta to reopen the Patna mint, but Hastings stuck to his earlier policy of having only one mint at Calcutta. Under Cornwallis (1776-83) the issue was, however, reconsidered and the Patna mint re-established. Both the closure and the reopening was thus connected with the same factor—the confusion of the *batta* system.

By the end of 1796 it was felt that there was not enough work at the provincial mints from which only 'trifling' sums of money were being coined. The Mint Master, Calcutta, was directed to order the provincial Mint Master to wind up their establishment after completing the minting of all the bullion already received.[26] A distinction was made between the assaying and minting work of the department, and it was decided to retain the Assay Master at Patna and Dacca. The concerned staff were to be retained on the existing salary but without any commission or allowance as they received formerly. They were also to retain the building then rented by the Company for the mint, or such parts thereof as were required for continuing the assay work. The Mint Master of Patna informed the authorities at Calcutta that the whole establishment of mint, servants and artificers, had been discharged on 31 December 1796. As for the Assay office, he enclosed a statement[27] listing the workers, their pay, contingent expenditure, etc. involving a monthly expenditure of Rs 212.00. Robert Blake, the erstwhile Mint Master, continued under the changed designation of Assay Master.

The Patna Mint in its truncated condition continued for another two years until it was finally wound up in 1798. Accepting the recommendations, largely, of the Mint Master, Calcutta, regarding the disposal of the Patna Mint building, its dwelling houses, the recovery of the amount unauthorisedly invested by Blake[28] in his personal indigo investments, etc., the Calcutta authorities directed the Board of Revenue, Bihar, to take charge of the buildings and suggest the best way of its disposal. The Assay Master, Patna, had earlier reported that although the mint building itself was in a good condition the dwelling houses were 'in a state of decay and could not withstand the next rainy season'. There was also some apparatus of a laminating machine built in the brick-work which could not be taken out without pulling down one side of the mill-room.

The Mint Master, Calcutta, had suggested that the mint building should be sold away 'for what they will fetch', or handed over to the Judge or the Collector. The mint building was accordingly sold to a local gentleman, Aḥmad Husain Khan for Rs 2050-0-0.[29] The exact site of the mint is not mentioned in the records except that it was near the river bank. According to local tradition, supported by some later published work, it was situated in *mahalla* Khwājā Kalān Ghāt close to the riverside. This is quite likely because the area constitut-

ing the jurisdiction of the present Khwājā Kalān *thana* seems to have formed the hub of the administrative buildings of the town during the Mughal period.[30]

Akbarnagar Mint: The town was founded by Raja Man Singh in the 40th *julūs* of Akbar's reign (1596).[31] It possessed a strategic importance which has been commented upon by Abū-l Faẓl. It was an important military outpost of the Mughal forces during the great uprising against Akbar in Bihar and Bengal in 1580s. It served as the headquarters of Raja Man Singh for some time, and it still has the remains of some buildings built by the Raja. It again came into prominence as the capital of Prince Shujā', governor of Bengal (1639-60). Commanding the river route down the Ganges to Calcutta it figured frequently in the East India Company records for hold-ups of the Company's boats carrying the trade goods.

The mint was established during Akbar's reign (1556-1605), probably soon after the conquest of Bihar.[32] It was active during the next three reigns. Some of Jahāngīr's silver coins bear the legend:

سکہ در اکبر نگر زد شاہ گردوی بارگاہ
شاہ نورالدین ابن اکبر بادشاہ

[Eng. tr. 1. Struck coin in Akbarnagar, the King with his court like the Heaven; 2. Shāh Nūru'd Dīn son of Akbar Bādshāh.]

Shāh Shujā' in his bid for the throne following Shāhjahān's illness struck coins from this mint. Very few specimens are known, but one of his silver coins is available in the Patna Museum Collection.[32]

John Marshall, the English traveller who had a wider interest and had an eye for things other than those of purely commercial interest, refers briefly to his visit to this mint in 1671. He writes that the town was three courses long and its streets were paved with cobble stone but they were then in a state of decay. He adds that he also went to the *Tanksall* (mint) where rupees were coined. He saw the workers making, but not stamping, the rupees. He, however, adds that the stamp was broad, being cut in steel, and having the characters (of the legend on a rupee) cut in 5 places upon the rupee, viz., 'upon the middle and round about 4'. The rupee was laid and covered with the stamp on both sides and then struck.[33]

Some Other Mint-Towns: Some other mints can also be indicated on the basis of a few rare extant specimens from those mints. Thus, for example, we know of a gold coin of Akbar issued from Ḥājipūr mint, a silver coin of Jahāngīr from Rohtas[34] mint and silver rupees of Shāh Ālam II from Monghyr mint. Perhaps, no regular mint was established at these places because we do not have coins of the subsequent period from these places. The available specimens, probably, represent special issues to mark some important occasion. Akbar's Ḥājipūr coin, for example, might have been issued on the occasion of the conquest of Ḥājipūr, referred to above. Jahāngīr's Rohtas coin, similarly, might be connected with the military expedition of Ibrahim Khan, governor of Bihar

(1615) against Chotanagpur, in which Rohtas fort would have served as a military base. As regards the Monghyr coin of Shāh 'Ālam II, we know otherwise too of a *Rikābī* (Stirrup Mint)[35] at Monghyr from which *Rikābī* coins of that ruler were issued.

Some very useful statistical work in regard to the gold, silver and copper coins of Mughal rulers issued from different mints was done by some early British numismatists. G.P.Taylor, for example, published in 1905[36] a list of the Mughal mints and the gold/silver/copper coins minted therefrom, chronologically arranged king-wise. The work was carried forward by R.B.Whitehead who prepared a more comprehensive list[37] taking into account the coins in private collections, those examined in individual published articles and those listed in the Sales Catalogues. Such works are very useful as providing basic data which can be worked upon from different angles.

Work along similar lines but of a different kind can be done in regard to the total available coins of different mints arranged *ṣūba*-wise. My own checking of the still unpublished collection of coins in the Patna Museum[38] has enabled me to prepare a list of all the coins of Patna/'Aẓīmābād and Akbarnagar (Rājmaḥal) mints covering a period of about two hundred years (1570s to 1770s). It shows the almost continuous working of the mints over this long period. More importantly, even the ephemeral, and largely nominal 'reigns' of puppet-rulers virtually dragged to the throne by powerful contending groups of nobles in the later Mughal period, are represented by the coins issued in their names from the Patna and Akbarnagar mints. Thus, we have the coins of Jahāndār Shāh (1712) whose 'reign' was officially derecognized by his successor Farrukhsiyar, and of Shāhjahān II and Shāhjahān III who 'reigned' just for a few months, the former in 1719, before Muḥammad Shāh's accession, and the latter in 1759, before the accession of Shāh 'Ālam II.[39]

III. *Organisation and Working of the Mints*

Like the framework of Mughal administration as a whole, the working of the mint department, as developed during the reign of Akbar, continued more of less undisturbed till the first quarter of the 18th century. It should, however, be noted that the methods and practices were not entirely new. They were mostly adapted from the system existing during the earlier period and were rendered more systematic.

Due attention has not been paid to the fact that we get a comparatively more detailed information in the *Ā'īn* about the mint department than about any other one. This has to be seen in the context of Abū-l Faẓl's remarks on the basic, all-round, utility of money as a medium of exchange, and of the department concerned with the minting of coins.[40] The work of a mint was divided into two main sections of assaying the metals and of minting them into coins, and its working was accordingly organized. The former was a work of basic importance, for on it depended the purity and fineness of a coin's metal, the prescribed proportion of its metallic mixture and ultimately the fixed value of a coin. That great care was taken to maintain the credibility of the currency in these respects

is evident from an interesting reference to a case occurring in the reign of Fīruz Tughlaq (1351-88) in which the silver content of a *shashgānī* coin had been fraudulently reduced.[41]

A side-work, not done in the mint itself, was the composing of suitable versified legends[42] on the coins. We do not know as to who composed the hemistiches found on some Mughal coins. A rare reference in the *Akhbārāt* shows that eulogistic quatrains or hemistiches were often submitted by high noblemen and other dignitaries for the pleasure of the emperor. This was done not necessarily for adoption on coins but it is not unlikely that some such specimens got approval for the purpose. An entry in an *Akhbār*[43] of Farrukhsiyar's reign (1712-19), dated 7 *julūs* (1719), records that Balkishan, the *Wakīl* of J'afar Khān, *Nāẓim* of Bengal, presented five *muhrs* and four *rupiyas*, dated 7 *julūs* issued from Jahāngīrnagar (Dacca), Akbarnagar and Orissa mints, respectively, which had been sent by his employer. He also submitted two hemistiches composed by himself. These read as follows:

ای تخت ترا تاج سلیمان در خور ای پایه ترا پایه کرسی تیمور
ای هفت اقلیم خطبه و سکه تواست حق داد مبارک است برنجش وبخور

[Eng. tr.: 1-2, O' thou, whose throne is equal in rank to Solomen's Crown; O' thou, whose rank is a support to Timur's Throne; 3-4, O' thou, whose *khuṭba'* and *sikkā* are being used in the seven worlds; God gave (it) to you, may it prove auspicious; Enjoy, and bestow favours.]

The main work of minting a coin comprised several stages; of melting the metal, cutting discs of appropriate sizes and shapes, and stamping the legend on the obverse and reverse sides.

A fairly detailed account of the works in different sections of a mint including the workers employed in them, their designations, the method of work, the wages, etc., are given in the *Ā'īn*.[44]

At the head of the department was the *dārogha'* who supervised the over-all working. He was expected to be 'a circumspect and intelligent man, of broad principles, who takes the cumbrous burden of his colleagues upon the shoulder of despatch'. He was expected to keep every one to his work, and show 'zeal and integrity'.

The assaying was done by the *ṣarrāf*[45] who determined the 'degree of purity of coins'. There were experienced and clever *ṣarrāfs* who could tell the degree of fineness of gold by the colour and brightness of the metal, but for the satisfaction of the general people a method had been adopted, which is described by Abū-l Faẓl as follows:

> To the ends of a few long needles, made of brass or such like metal, small pieces of gold are affixed, having their degrees of fineness written on them. When the workmen wish to assay a new piece of gold, they first draw with it a few lines on a touch stone, and some other lines with the needles. By comparing both sets of lines they discover the degree of fineness of the gold.

It is, however, necessary that the lines be drawn in the same manner, and with the same force, so as to avoid deceptics.[46]

As regards the workers engaged in actual minting of coins, their wages, etc., the *Ā'īn* gives the following remarkably detailed information.[47]

1. Weighman. He weighed the coins, and was paid at the following rates: for weighing 100 *jalālī* gold *muhrs*, $1\frac{3}{4}$ *dām*; for weighing 1000 rupees, $6\frac{19}{25}$ *dām*;[48] for weighing 1000 copper *dām*, $\frac{11}{25}$ of a *dām*, and accordingly for different quantities.[49]
2. The Melter of the Ore. For gold and silver, he made large and small trenches in a tablet of clay and smeared it with grease. In case of copper, it was sprinkled with ashes. The metal was then poured into it and cast into ingots. His wages 'for the above mentioned quantity', [i.e., the quantities of *muhr* (gold), rupees (silver) and *dām* (copper) as given in no.1 above] was as follows: for the same quantity of gold $2\frac{3}{5}$ *dām*; for the same quantity of silver, 5 *dām* and $23\frac{1}{4}$ *jital*; and for the same quantity of copper, 4 *dām* and $21\frac{1}{2}$ *jital*.
3. The Platemaker. He made the 'adulterated' (mixed with alloy) gold into plates of 6 or 7 *māshas* each, 6 fingers in length and breadth, and took them to the Assay Master who measured the plates in a mould made of copper, sorted out the suitable ones, and stamped them to 'prevent alteration'. His wages for the 'above-mentioned quaintity of gold 'was $42\frac{1}{3}$ *dām*.
4. Melter of the refined metal. He melted the refined plates of gold, and cast them, as described above, into ingots. His fee for 100 gold-*muhrs* was 3 *dām*.
5. The *Ẓarrāb*. He cut the gold, silver and copper ingots exactly into round pieces of the size of coined money. In Iran and Turan the pieces were cut on an anvil, but in India the workers were so expert that they cut the pieces without any such instrument, and they did it so exactly that there was not a 'difference of a single hair'. Their wages were as follows : for 100 gold *muhrs*, 21 *dām* $1\frac{1}{4}$ *jital*, for the weight of 100 rupees, 5 *dām* $8\frac{3}{4}$ *jital*, if he cut rupees, and 28 *dām* in addition, if it were to be cut into quarter rupees; for 1000 copper *dām*, the fee was 20 *dām*, for the same weight of half and quarter *dām* 25 *dām*, and for half-quarter *dām*, which were called *dāmris*, 69 *dām*.
6. The Engraver. He engraved the dies of the coin on steel and 'such like metals'. At the time of the compilation of the *Ā'īn* (1598) the job was held by *Mawlāna* 'Ali Aḥmad of Delhi who was unrivalled in his skill. He cut the letters in steel exactly like the copyslips of the most skilful calligraphers. The coins were then stamped with these dies. He held the rank of a *Yuzbāshī*,[50] and had two assistants, each one of them receiving 600 *dām* a month.
7. The *Sikkachī* (Puncher). He put the round pieces of metal between the two dies (obverse and reverse) and stamped them with the help of the

hammerer (*putk-chi*). His fee for 100 gold-*muhrs* was $1\frac{2}{5}$ *dām*; for 1000 rupees, 5 *dām* $9\frac{1}{2}$ *jital*, for 1000 rupees of small silver pieces, 1 *dām* 3 *jital* in addition; for 1000 copper *dām*, 3 *dām*; for 2000 half-*dām* and 4000 quarter-*dāms*, 3 *dām* $18\frac{3}{4}$ *jital*; and for 8000 half-quarter *dām*, $10\frac{1}{2}$ *dām*. Out of these fee the *sikkachī* gave one-sixth to the hammerer for whom there was no separate allowance.

8. The *Sabbāk*. He made the refined silver into round plates. He got 54 *dām* for every 1000 rupees weight.

On the general administrative and accounts side there were the following staff:

9. The *Amīn*. He was expected to be a man of integrity and impartiality, whom everyone trusted whether 'friends' or 'enemies', and who could act as a sort of a mediator or adjudicator in case of differences between the *dārogha* and the workmen.
10. The *Mushrif*. He wrote down the daily expenditure honestly and maintained a 'systematic day-book'.
11. The Treasurer. He 'watched over the profits', and was expected to be upright in all his dealings.
12. The Merchant. He seemed to be a sort of link between the merchants and general customers of the mint who brought their bullion to be coined into money. His duties are described in these words, 'He buys up gold, silver and copper, by which he gains a profit for himself, assists the department, and benefits the revenues of the State'.

As regards the position during the later Mughal period, some information is available from the *dastūru'l 'amal* literature. One such work is the *Hidāyatu'l Qawā'id*,[51] written in 1712 by Shāh Hidāyatullāh, the then *sajjādah nashīn* of the Maner *khānqāh*. It has a small section on the *Dāru'l Ẓarb*, or the Department of Mint, stating the rules and regulations[52] to make it run efficiently.

At the outset it is stated that the officer of the mint, on taking charge, should obtain, duly sealed, from the *dārogha*, *mushrif* and *chaudhari* the rules of their respective sections (standard weight of coin, commission/ remuneration of the melters, contingency expenses for firewood, salt, tamarind, etc.), the amount collected by way of *abwāb* (the portion credited to government's account, and that paid as *mawājib* to the workers, etc.). The officer-in-charge should work according to these rules and the orders of the king. He should maintain a date-wise account of the income and expenditure, so that at the time of enquiry (auditing) he was not put to embarrassment.

The name of 'the *khalifa*' of the Age' (the ruler), the year *julūs* (regnal year) of minting, and the name of the mint-town should be distinctly stamped. Care should also be taken that the edges of the coins did not get cracked due to defects of minting or under-weighing.

It is stated that as the merchants bring in their bullion for minting, it should be assayed and handed over to the melters. After melting it they showed it again to the assayers for checking. The plates were then cut out and stamped. The rates for minting different categories of coins varied from 5 *annas* 5 *ganda* to 7 *annas*

5 *ganda* for *muhrs* and $2\frac{1}{2}$ rupees to $3\frac{1}{2}$ rupees for one hundred rupees (The rates for copper coins are not mentioned). In addition, a sort of contingency charge of 6 *annas* for firewood and 7 *annas* for salt and tamarind[53] used was charged for each one thousand pieces coined. The *peshkar*, *dārogha* and *tawīldār* (treasurer), melters, engravers and weighmen and *piyādas* posted in the mint got their *muwājib* (wages) out of the income thus derived.

The weight of an *asharfi* was 9 *māsha* 6 *surkh*, that of a rupee, 10 *māsha* and $2\frac{1}{12}$ *surkh*.[54]

It thus appears that the main stages of the work—the bringing in of the bullion, its assaying, melting, cutting and stamping—were more or less the same but changes had occurred in the rates of remuneration, the fees for minting, etc. More changes, or rather deterioration, took place later on. Of these the most ruinous was the 'farming' of mints which was introduced for the first time during the reign of Farrukhsiyar (1712-19) by his *dīwān*, Ratan Das.[55] The charge of a mint could also be given in lieu of a *jāgīr*, with the holder enjoying the right of sub-letting it. Short-term farming of one year's duration was more in vogue, and there was no bar to someone getting the contract for a fresh term, even if a charge of fraud had been proved against him earlier.

It required a lot of expenditure, or *nazrāna'*, with correspondingly lower-priced gifts to lower officers, to obtain a contract. In the case of the Banaras mint, e.g., the farmer or contractor, Bal Govind paid rupees 45,000/- to Nawāb Shujā'ud Dawla, and rupees 9,000/- to Raja Balwant Singh, to get the contract for just one year, 1763. The contractor naturally wanted to get his investment recovered quickly along with such profits as he could make on it. One of the most frequently used devices for this purpose was the manipulation of the *batta* system, and the requirement calling upon the holders of the 'old' rupees (i.e., rupees coined in an earlier period) to bring in their rupees into the mint and get them 're-coined' into *sicca* or current rupees. This yielded a double profit to the contractors because the holders had to pay minting fee at an enhanced rate and, secondly, the better bullion value of the old coins was debased.

On account of this basic change in the working of the mints, from a governmental department to a speculative investment, there was a sharp increase in the minting fee and other charges. The fee payable for minting of different coins in the Banaras mint in the 15th *julūs* of Muḥammad Shāh's reign, AH 1145/1734, was as follows:

Gold *Muhrs*,[56] (weigh, 9 *māsha*, 4 *ratti*, *chowlie*,[57] assay 5 *ratti*, per *tola*, the same as the Delhi *muhr*, and current at that time for *sicca* rupees 12/-).

Duties	*Rs.*	*A.*	*P.*	
To Government	4	8	0	
To Officer of the Mint	2	4	0	
To Artificers	0	15	0	
	7	11	0	per cent

Rupees[58] (Old rupees being 're-coined').

Duties	*Rs.*	*A.*	*P.*
To Government	0	6	0

To Officers of Mint	0	3	0	
To Coiners	0	6	0	
	0	15	0	per cent

Only a few years later, in the first regnal year of the succeeding ruler, Aḥmad Shāh (1754-59) the fees had further increased as follows:[59]

Gold *muhrs* (weight 9 *māsha*,, 4 *ratti*, 0 *chowlie*, price, rupees 14-0-0).

Duties	*Rs.*	*A.*	*P.*		
Old Duties	9	0	0		
Increase by Balwant Singh	2	12	0		
	11	12	0		per cent
Fee of Officers attached	2	4	0		14.0.0
To Officers of Mint	0	0	0		
To Assay master	1	0	0		
To Coiners & Artificers	0	15	0	1-5-0	15-15-0
For Rupees On re-conining of Old rupees					
To Government	0	6	0		
To Old Duties	0	3	6	0-9-6	
Fees of Officers attached				0-4-6	
				0-14-0	
To Assay Master	0	1	0		
To Coiners & Artificers	0	4	6	0-5-6	
					1-3-6
On Bullion, Mixed with old rupees					0-5-6
					per cent

Thus, an element of financial speculation crept into the working of the mints and it adversely affected the normal trade and financial transactions and, in the long run, the very credibility of the currency. With the gradual acquisition of the right of minting coins by the East India Company a new chapter begins in the history of Indian mints and coinage.[60]

IV. *Some Rare Coins*

The coins selected for presentation here are such as represent the scarce specimens,[61] or have a bearing upon some political/military events in Bihar. It need hardly be added that the selection is only illustrative, and that further studies of unexamined collections as well as discoveries of new coins will add considerably to the list.

Specimens of some of the coins presented here are available in the un-catologued Patna Museum Collection, too. The coins issued from the Mughal mints in Bihar were naturally available in large numbers in the area, and some of them came to be acquired by the Museum as stray finds and hoards discovered in the state.

As pointed out above, there are no extant coins of the Patna mint for the pre-Akbar period. Of Akbar, too, the earliest available coin from Patna is of the year AH 983 (1575-76), and gold and copper issues are very few.

(1) Silver Coins of Akbar, dated AH 983 from Patna mint. The coin, a square shaped one, belongs to the Patna Museum Collection.[62] Its legend has been read as follows:

Obverse, *Lā Ilāha Ilā Allāh, Muḥammad Rasūlu'llāh.*

Reverse, *Jalālu'd Dīn Muḥammad Akbar Bādshāh Ghāzī, Dāru'l Ẓarb, Pa(tna), 983.*

This is among the earliest available coins of Akbar from the Patna mint. As we know, the Patna fort was conquered by Akbar in August 1574 and the coin was issued in AH 983 (beginning 12 April, 1575).

(2) Gold Coin of Akbar from Akbarnagar mint. Its legend reads as follows:

Obverse, *Jall-i Jalālahū, Akbar,*

Reverse, *Māh Farwardīn, Ilāhī Ẓarb, Akbarnagar.*[63]

As stated above, the mint was established soon after the Mughal conquest of Bihar. Akbar's coins from this mint are scarce but not unknown.

(3) Gold *Muhr* of Jahāngīr from Akbarnagar mint.[64] Its legend reads as follows:

Obverse, *Nūru'd Dīn Jahāngīr (bin) Akbar Shāh,*

Reverse, *Māh, Tīr, 20 Ilāhī, Ẓarb Akbarnagar.*

This coin fills up a gap in the gold issues of Akbar and Shāhjahān from this mint. Further, the use of the *Ilāhī* era on coins was discontinued after Akbar's death, but it was continued by Jahāngīr for some time. The present coin belongs to that group.

(4) Shāhjahān's Silver *Nithār*, dated AH 1068 (1657-58) from Akbarnagar.

As pointed out in Hodivala's learned notes[65] on Mughal numismatics the word *Nithār* was used for scattering or showering, or the things so showered and scattered, including gems, coins, etc. This was the usual meaning of the term but in Jahāngīr's reign it got a specific signification. *Nithārī* was a word used for the quarter-rupee. The word fell into disuse after some time but came into circulation subsequently. The term came to be used for small coins minted for common distribution on special occasions such as birthdays and annual celebration of the coronation of a king. They were struck by special order for such occasions. Such specimens are scarce, but Hodivala has noted that *Nithārs* of Shāhjahān's reign from Akbarnagar, and of Aurangzeb's reign from Etawa and Jahāngīrnagar are known.

One such *Nithār* belongs to the Punjab Museum Collection.[66] Its legend reads as follows:

Obverse, *Ṣāḥibqarān*, 106 (8).

Reverse, *Akbarnagar.*

(5) Silver Coin of Shāh Shujā' dated AH 1068, from Akbarnagar.

The coin belongs to the Patna Museum Collection.[67] Its legend reads as follows:

Obverse, *Lā Ilāha Ilā Allāh, Muḥammad Rasūlu'llāh* (in square lined area).

Reverse, *Shāh (Muḥammad) Shujā', Ghāzi, (Julūs) Aḥd, (Ẓarb) Akbarnagar.*

As we know, Shāh Shujā's bid for the throne proved to be unsuccessful and he paid for it with his life. As was customary, the coins must have been issued along with the proclamation of his kingship, and this one belongs to the very first year of his 'reign'. The present coin, issued from Akbarnagar, which served as his provincial capital earlier for some 20 years, and belonging to the very first year of his 'reign', deserves notice.

(6) A rare 1/8 rupee-piece of Aurangzeb from Akbarnagar mint.[68] The legend of the coin reads as follows:

Obverse, *Bādshāh Ālamgīr, 107.*

Reverse, *San 9, Ẓarb Akbarnagar.*

Issues of fractional pieces of a rupee-coin are generally scarce, and this coin has been characterized as a 'rare' one belonging to the British Museum Collection.

(7) A Rare *dirham-i Sharā'ī* of Aurangzeb.

The *dirham-i Shara'ī*, or legal drachme, are square silver coins (a round one is also known) weighing about 46 grains, and bearing on one side the words *dirham-i shara'ī* and, on the other, the mint's name. The issuing of these coins has some bearing on Aurangzeb's religious policy and his attempt to enforce some of the regulations of the *sharī'at* relating to the payment of *zakāt*, dowry, etc.[69] The *zakāt* was a religious tax which every Muslim possessing certain categories of wealth beyond a specified minimum had to pay.

Such coins were issued in Aurangzeb's reign from about half a dozen mints including Patna (one of Farrukhsiyar's reign is also known). Since they were meant to serve a limited, religious, purpose, not too many are known.

(8) A Rare Coin bearing Āẓīmu's Shān's name, issued from Jahāngīrnagar mint in AH 1124 (1712-13).

The legend of the coin reads as follows:

Obverse, *Ba Fatḥ wa Ẓafar Bādshāh Āẓīm, Dīn parwar, 1124.*

Reverse, *San-i Aḥad, Julūs-i Maimanat Mānūs, Ẓarb-i Jahāngīrnagar.*

Prince 'Aẓīmu's Shan's close association with Bihar and Bengal, and particularly with Patna, which was re-named 'Aẓīmābād after him, is well known. He was appointed *ṣubādār* of Bengal in AH 1109 (1697-98) and later, of Bihar in AH 1114 (1702-03). After he was recalled by Aurangzeb, he had left his son, Prince Farrukhsiyar, as his deputy at Jahāngīrnagar (Dacca). Farrukhsiyar later moved to Akbarnagar and he was at Patna when, in March 1712, he heard of Bahādur Shāh's death and proclaimed his father's accession. He also 'caused coins to be stamped... in his name'. Soon afterwards, he heard of his father's death in a battle near Lahore.

Whitehead,[70] who drew attention to this coin, writes that it has been listed among the coins of Farrukhsiyar without any comment, and remarks that it is quite likely that such coins were issued from Patna mint too, which bore the Prince's name and was called 'Aẓīmābād mint. That would have been a 'happy augury'. Such a coin from 'Aẓīmābād mint is, however, not known, but we have the present one from Jahāngīrnagar, which, it may be recalled had served as Farrukhsiyar's headquarters earlier.

(9) Silver Coin of Shāhjahān II from 'Aẓīmābād mint.

The legend of the coin[71] reads as follows :

Obverse, *Sikka-i Mubārak Shāhjahān Bādshāh Ghāzī . . . 31*

Reverse, *San-i Aḥad, Julūsi Maimanat Mānūs, Ẓarb 'Aẓīmābād*

Rafi'ud Daulah, a grandson of Bahādur Shāh (1707-12), was brought to the throne, as Shāhjahān II, just for a few months in the year 1131 (1718-19) during the course of the unprecedented upheavals following Farrukhsiyar's assassination in 1719. In keeping with the political tradition, even within this short period and in the midst of grave political disturbances, coins in the name of the puppet ruler were issued from several mints.

The calligraphy of the coin's legend is very beautiful.

(10) A silver coin of Shāhjahān III from 'Aẓīmābād mint.

The legend of the coin[72] reads as follows:

Obverse, *Shāhjahān Ghāzī. . .* 1174

San-i Julūsi Maimanat Mānūs.

Under circumstances similar to that after Farrukhsiyar's assassination, noted above, Shāhjahān III was brought to the throne by the *Wazir* Ghāzīu'd Dīn after the death of 'Alamgīr II in 1759. He was the son of Prince Kāmbakhsh and a grandson of Aurangzeb. The significance of the coin is similar to the previous one, no. 9.

V. *Function of Mints other than the Coining of Money*

This aspect of the working of a Mughal mint has not received any attention and no work has been done on it. It goes to the credit of the East India Company's early officials that they showed awareness of it and made enquiries about it. The available information relates to the Banaras mint at the turn of the eighteenth century, and the reason for it is obvious. Banaras was the centre of the famous *zarī* industry and the manufacturing of the gold and silver threads upon which the industry was based was done in the mint.

Just as, after the grant of *Dīwānī* (right to collect land-revenue) of Bihar and Bengal to the East India Company in 1765, enquiries had been made by the Company's officials into the working of the revenue department, modes of settlement of land-revenue, perquisites of officers, rights of 'owners' and cultivators, etc., similarly, on taking over the administration of Banaras enquiries were made, *inter alia*, about the history and working of the mint there.[73]

One part of the enquiry was about the relations between the mint officers and the *zarī* workers,[74] and the process of manufacturing gold/silver threads, payments

made for it, etc. The queries made were: (i) whether the Principal Mint Officer Amba Shankar[75] and Cawn (*sic*) Das exercied any control over the manufacturers of gold/silver threads, (ii) what connection such manufacturers had with the mint, (iii) nature of the office of *chaudharies* (Agents of the Manufacturers' guilds) and their emoluments, (iv) what loss and inconvenience would be caused to the traders if the connection between the mint and the manufacturers was cut, and to what extent the prosperity of the town depended upon the work of these manufacturers?

The answers to these queries were:

(I) The *dārogha'* of the mint had 'supervisory' powers over the different classes of manufacturers and 'he could settle all their matters'. The Assay Master had no such power.

There were four classes of such manufacturers: (a) *Powteas*, or gold/silver wire-drawers. There were then only nine persons who claimed the privilege of this trade on ground of being engaged in it since a long time. Their workshops were located close to the mint, and on the death of any one of them his lineal descendant succeeded to the trade; (b) *Taneeas*, or manufacturers of gold/silver threads. It was a large class, consisting of 1200 workers; (c) *Chupereeas*, or manufacturers of *Bādla*, or flattened gold/silver thread; and (d) *Batunhāras*, or manufacturers of gold/silver lace.

(II) The silver was sent by the merchants to the mint where it was formed into ingots or *passa* for the purpose of being drawn into wire. The ingots were checked by the Assay Master and if they had the prescribed proportion (6-8 grains in a rupee's weight) they were stamped with the *dārogha*'s seal on payment of the prescribed Government fee.[76]

(III) The *chaudharies* were not officers of the mint. They were agents for the manufacturers and were paid by them. Their duty was to send for different workmen and to inform them when their services were required. They arranged meetings of the manufacturers on the occasions of different festivals. They received payments at different rates from the different classes of manufacturers.[77]

(IV) The merchants and dealers did not favour the connection of their trade with the mint being cut. They apprehended that the ingots would be debased if processed otherwise than through the mint. That would affect their trade adversely. The local committee 'fully admitted the strength' of their objection and did not recommend any alteration in the established processes of manufacture. Further, they pointed out that the traders suffered from a number of impositions which were injurious to the Government's interests too. If these were removed the Government would also benefit from the increased export of the manufactured goods. The Mint Committee, Fort William,[78] observed that the continuance of the Banaras mint was necessary both on historical and practical grounds. The coins current in Banaras were distinct from those in the Lower Provinces and the Calcutta mint could not meet the requirements of both

the areas. The *zamīndārs* of Banaras were required to pay the revenue in Banaras coins, and that too necessitated the continuance of the mint. This would 'incidentally', also earn the goodwill of the Banaras merchants, There was a close connection between the local *zarī* industry and the mint. The traders, who contributed to the prosperity of the town, wanted the working of the mint to be continued. Any other arrangement, they felt, would lead to 'intrusion of improper persons who might debase the metal and injure the trade'.

Banaras was, of course, well known all over the country for its *zarī* industry, but the industry was not confined to that place only. It flourished in other places too, including Patna.[79] It is not unlikely that the Patna mint too performed similar functions in regard to the local *zarī* industry as did the Banaras mint. Irrespective of this, it is evident that the work of the Mughal mints was not confined to the coining of money. It had a wider dimension. In regard to the Banaras mint itself, we find that the *dārogha* of the mint had the power to levy custom duties on precious stones.[80] Similar power might have been exercised by the *dāroghas* of mints situated in regions producing precious stones. It is clear that the Mughal mints, at least some of them in addition to their normal work of coining money, also played a wider economic role.

APPENDIX I [+]

Establishment for Assay Office at Patna, 1797

1.	Head Sircar to receive and take bullion	Rs 50.00 per month
1.	Weighman	Rs 15.00 per month
1.	'Native Writer'	Rs 15.00 per month
1.	Man to[#] . . . the old coins and melt the Muster (?)	Rs 10.00 per month
1.	Man to attend the Assay Furnace	Rs 12.00 per month
1.	Blacksmith	Rs 10.00 per month
1.	Armorer to clean tools	Rs 4.00 per month
1.	Bellows-man	Rs 3.00 per month
1.	Carpenter-Mistry	Rs 6.00 per month
1.	Carpenter-Mistry	Rs 5.00 per month
1.	Bricklayer	Rs 5.00 per month
1.	Jamā'atdār	Rs 5.00 per month
4.	Peons @ Rs 4 each	Rs 16.00 per month
1.	Durwan	Rs 4.00 per month
1.	Sweeper	Rs 3.00 per month
2.	Waterman @ Rs 3/8 each	Rs 7.00 per month
2.	Coolies @ Rs 3 each	Rs 6.00 per month
	Firewood and Charocal per month	Rs 36.00 per month
	Total	Rs 212.00* per month

\+ Letter from Robert Blake, Assay Master, to James Miller, Mint Master, dated Assay Office, Patna, 8th February 1797.

\# Lacuna in the original record.

* The proposed Establishment at Dacca was quite similar and envisaged a monthly expenditure of Rs 223-8-0.

APPENDIX II ++

Mughal Mints in Bihar and the gold/silver and copper coins issued from them, prepared by G.P.Taylor in 1905** as a part of his wider list of the mints of Mughal Emperors of India.

Mint	*Metal*
Akbarnagar	Gold, silver and copper
Patna	Gold, silver and copper
Rohtas	Silver
'Aẓīmābād	Gold, silver and copper

Honorific Epithets of the Mints

Patna (Akbar's reign)	*Dāru'l Ẓarb* (seat of the mint)
Patna (Jahāndār Shāh's reign)	*Mustaqaru'l Mulk* (resting-place of the kingdom)
'Aẓīmābād (Farrukhsiyar's reign)	*Mustaqaru'l Mulk.*

++ G.P.Taylor's article, "The Mints of the Mughal Emperors of India", *JBBRAS*, Centenary Memorial Volume, 1905, part VI.

** It is noted that the number of mints as represented in the British Museum Collection was 80; Calcutta Museum Collection, 76; Lahore Museum Collection, 105. The present article had brought in additional mint-names, totalling 222, if mints having more than one name (Shergarh Qanauj and Shahabad Qanauj; Patna and 'Aẓīmābād, etc.) were to be counted separately, otherwise 191.

APPENDIX III +

List of Gold/Silver/Copper Coins issued from Akbarnagar and Patna/ 'Aẓīmābād Mints, Arranged Reignwise

Sl. no.	*Ruler*	*Metal*		
		Gold	*Silver*	*Copper*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Akbarnagar Mint				
1.	Akbar	PM	LM	K
2.	Jahāngīr		BM	
3.	Jahāngīr and Nūrjahān		LM	
4.	Shāhjahān	XI	BM	
5.	Aurangzeb 'Ālamgīr	BM	BM	BM
6.	Shāh Shujā'		LM	

\+ This forms part of a larger Table listing the names and issues (gold/silver/copper) of Mughal mints in India, vide R.B.Whitehead's article, *JASB*, vol. VIII, 1912, *Numismatic Supplement*, no. XIX, pp. 425-531.
The abbreviations in column 3 stand for; B = BM = *Catalogue of British Museum*, 1892; *BM* = Collection of G.B.Beazly acquired by British Museum; *IM* = *Catalogue of Indian Museum, Calcutta; LM* = *Catalogue of Lucknow Museum.*

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
7.	Shāh ʻĀlam Bahādur		BM	B
8.	Jahāndār Shāh		*BM*	
9.	Farrukhsiyar		W	
10.	Muḥammad Shāh		IM	
11.	Aḥmad Shāh Bahādur		IM	
12.	ʻĀlamgir II		IM	
Patna Mint				
1.	Akbar	BM	BM	K
2.	Jahāngir	BM	BM	
3.	Jahāngir and Nūrjahan			
4.	Shāhjahān	IM	BM	R(i)
5.	Aurangzeb	IM	BM	
6.	Farrukhsiyar	BM		
ʻAẓīmābād Mint				
1.	Aurangzeb	Bh#	IM	%(i)
2.	Shāh ʻĀlam Bahādur		BM	BM *
3.	Farrukhsiyar	XI	BM	
4.	Muḥammad Shāh	St.	BM	
5.	Aḥmad Shāh	St.	BM	
6.	ʻĀlamgir II		BM	
7.	Shāhjahān III	IM	IM	
8.	Shāh ʻĀlam II	BM	BM	
Ḥājipūr Mint				
1.	Akbar	V		
Rohtas Mint				
1.	Jahāngir	F		
Monghyr Mint				
1.	Shāh ʻĀlam II	V		

PM = *Catalogue of the Lahore Museum, Punjab*; K= *Sale* Catalogue of the White King Collection, Amsterdam, 1905; R(i) = J. Rodgers "Mughal Copper Coins", *JASB*, 1895.
St. *Collection of Sir John Standley*, London. The Roman numerals (XI) refer to the no. of *Numismatic Supplement to JASB.*
F = *Collection of Mr Framjee Thanawala*, Bombay.
V =*Collection of Lieut. Col. Vost.* I.M.S.,Lucknow, also article, 'On Some Rare Muslim Coins', *JASB*, 1895.

\# 'Bh' means Bahawalpur State *Toshākhānā* (Treasury).

* Also of Shāh ʻĀlam Bahādur as Muʻaẓẓam Shāh, silver XV.

APPENDIX IV

List of Silver Coins of Mughal Emperors, Issued from Patna/'Aẓīmābād and Akbarnagar (Rajmahal) Mints, Preserved in the Patna Meseum.*

Sl.no.	*Acquisition no.*	*Ruler*	*Mint*	*Date*	*Remarks*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
			Patna/'Aẓīmābād Mint		
1.	1566	Akbar	Patna	983	
2.	7496	Akbar	Patna	987	
3.	1567	Akbar	Patna	42	*Shāhrīwār*
4.	1568	Akbar	Patna	43	*Khurdād*
5.	5108	Akbar	Patna	46	*Dī*
6.	5489	Jahāngīr	Patna	1015/2	
7.	362	Jahāngīr	Patna	1024	*Khurdād*
8.	5490	Jahāngīr	Patna	1031/17	*Tir*
9.	6387	Jahāngīr	Patna	1035	*Dī*
10.	5555	Jahāngīr	Patna	1037/22	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.5556
11.	5618	Shāhjahān	Patna	1037/2	
12.	1571	Shāhjahān	Patna	1039/2	*Shāhrīwār*
13.	294	Shāhjahān	Patna	1039/2	*Dī*
14.	1572	Shāhjahān	Patna	1039/2	*Bahman*

* The Museum Register shows the Acquisition no., the name of the ruler, the year/*julūs* (not in all cases), manner of acquisition, reference to concerned correspondence, reference to types in published catalogues, etc.

My Table is arranged mint-wise and king-wise. It shows the acquisition number, name of ruler, and date. The date-figures shows the *Hijri* year and/or the regnal year (*julūs*). In some cases the names of the months of the solar Iranian calendar-year are also given. The twelve months are as follows:

1. *Farwardīn*, 31 days (21 March-20 April)
2. *Ordībihisht*, 31 days (21April-21 May)
3. *Khurdād*, 31 days (22 May-21 June)
4. *Tīr*, 31 days (22 June-22 July)
5. *Amardād*, 31 days (23 July-22August)
6. *Shāhrīwār*, 31 days (23 August-22 September)
7. *Mīhr*, 30 days (23 September-22 October)
8. *Ābān*, 30 days (23 October-21 November)
9. *Āẓar*, 30 days (22 November-21 December)
10. *Dī*, 30 days (22 December-20 January)
11. *Bahman*, 30 days (21 January-19 February)
12. *Isfandārmuz*, 30 days (20 February-20 March)

The Register covers the entire, larger, collection of which we are concerned here only with the Mughal coins which are mostly in silver.

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
15.	1577	Shāhjahān	Patna	1039/3	*Tīr*
16.	1578	Shāhjahān	Patna	1040/3	*Ābān*
17.	1576	Shāhjahān	Patna	1040/3	*Dī*
18.	1575	Shāhjahān	Patna	1040/4	*Amardād*
19.	5619	Shāhjahān	Patna	1041/4	*Dī*
20.	1574	Shāhjahān	Patna	1041/5	*Ordibihisht*
21.	295	Shāhjahān	Patna	1042/5	*Mihr*
22.	363	Shāhjahān	Patna	42/6	
23.	6390	Shāhjahān	Patna	1042/6	1 more coin, same date Acq. no.19130.
24.	364(i) *	Shāhjahān	Patna	1043/6	1 more coin, same date Acq. no. 1569.
25.	365	Shāhjahān	Patna	/7	
26.	5620	Shāhjahān	Patna	/8	1 more coin, same date Acq. no. 17839
27.	296	Shāhjahān	Patna	/11	
28.	18689	Shāhjahān	Patna	1049/12	
29.	12114	Shāhjahān	Patna	/12	
30.	297	Shāhjahān	Patna	/12	Half-rupee ?
31.	366(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/13	
32.	299	Shāhjahān	Patna	/14	3 more coins, same dates,Acq. nos.312, 367, 5621.
33.	368(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/15	
34.	369	Shāhjahān	Patna	/16	
35.	12112	Shāhjahān	Patna	53/17	
36.	370	Shāhjahān	Patna	/17	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.1211.
37.	300	Shāhjahān	Patna	/18	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.371.
38.	372	Shāhjahān	Patna	/19	
39.	373(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/20	1 more coin, same date, year, Acq. no. 12113.
40.	301(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/21	3 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 374(ii), 12115, 18690.
41.	375	Shāhjahān	Patna	/22	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 6797.
42.	2981(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/23	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.376.

* Against some Acquisition nos. two sets of coins, of different period/ruler are noted: only the one relevant for our purpose has been described.

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
43.	302(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/24	3 more coins, same dates, Acq. nos.377, 12121, 18691.
44.	303(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/25	1 more coin, same date,Acq. no.378(i).
45.	304(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/26	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 379(i).
46.	305	Shāhjahān	Patna	/27	
47.	381(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/28	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 12122.
48.	12116	Shāhjahān	Patna	/29	
49.	382	Shāhjahān	Patna	/30	
50.	12120	Shāhjahān	Patna	1066/30	
51.	306	Shāhjahān	Patna	1067/31	
52.	383(i)	Shāhjahān	Patna	/31	
53.	12117	Shāhjahān	Patna	/32	
54.	7634	Shāhjahān	Patna	No date	2 more coins, no date
55.	5716	Aurangzeb	Patna	1070	*Aḥd* *
56.	16266	Aurangzeb	Patna	1070/3	
57.	5717	Aurangzeb	Patna	1071/3	
58.	12085	Aurangzeb	Patna	/6	1/2 rupee
59.	12086	Aurangzeb	Patna	/8	
60.	12087	Aurangzeb	Patna	/14	
61.	17637	Aurangzeb	Patna	/17	
62.	12088	Aurangzeb	Patna	/21	
63.	7180	Aurangzeb	Patna	1090/22	
64.	17862	Aurangzeb	Patna	1090/23	
65.	12084	Aurangzeb	Patna	/24	
66.	17638	Aurangzeb	Patna	109/28	
67.	7631	Aurangzeb	Patna	1097/29	
68.	17609	Aurangzeb	Patna	1099/3.	
69.	6790	Aurangzeb	Patna	1099/32	
70.	12068	Aurangzeb	Patna	1100/33	
71.	12083	Aurangzeb	Patna	1101/33	
72.	7196	Aurangzeb	Patna	1101/34	2 more coins, same date, Acq.nos.7197, 12082, latter, 1/2 rupee.
73.	12076	Aurangzeb	Patna	1103/35	

* *Aḥd* means one, first regnal year.

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
74.	12080	Aurangzeb	Patna	1104/37	
75.	19117	Aurangzeb	Patna	1107/39	
76.	7181	Aurangzeb	Patna	1107/40	1 more coin, same date Acq. no.7182.
77.	5718	Aurangzeb	Patna	1108/40	3 more coins, same date Acq. nos.7185, 7186/2081.
78.	7187	Aurangzeb	Patna	1108/41	
79.	7188	Aurangzeb	Patna	1109/41	3 more coins, same date Acq.nos. 7189, 12074, 12075.
80.	7190	Aurangzeb	Patna	1109/42	1 more coin, same date Acq. no. 7191.
81.	7193	Aurangzeb	Patna	1110/42	
82.	7195	Aurangzeb	Patna	1110/43	2 more coins, same date Acq. nos. 12065, 17639.
83.	7198	Aurangzeb	Patna	1111/43	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.12079.
84.	7199	Aurangzeb	Patna	1111/44	3 more coins, same date Acq. nos. 12077, 12078, 17640.
85.	7200	Aurangzeb	Patna	1112/44	
86.	17863	Aurangzeb	Patna	1113/45	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 19120.
87.	17864	Aurangzeb	Patna	1116/48	
88.	8506	Aurangzeb	Patna	1116/49	
89.	19834	Aurangzeb	'Aẓīmābād	1117 90.	1 more coin, same date Acq. no. 15289.
90.	322	Aurangzeb	'Aẓīmābād		
91.	19836	Aurangzeb	'Aẓīmābād	1111/50	
92.	7201	Aurangzeb 'Aẓīmābād	'Aẓīmābād	1118/51	
93.	323	Aurangzeb	'Aẓīmābād	1119/51	
94.	7203	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	1119/*Aḥd*	
95.	336	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	1120/2	4 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 7204, 15290, 19867. 19868.
96.	19870	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	/2	

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
97.	19869	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	21/2	
98.	337	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	1121/3	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 5820.
99.	19871	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	21/3	
100.	338	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	1121/4	
101.	19873	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	/4	
102.	19872	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	1122/4	
103.	7205	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	1122/5	
104.	19875	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	22/5	
105.	339	Shāh 'Ālam I (Bahādur Shāh)	'Āẓīmābād	1123/5	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.7206.
106.	353	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	/2	
107.	19839	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	1125/2	
108.	19840	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	/2	2 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 18841, 19842
109.	354	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	1126/3	4 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 356(A), 5872, 7207, 15276.
110.	15277	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	.../3	3 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 19844-46.
111.	357(A)	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	1127/4	
112.	8824	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	.../4	
113.	15549	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	.../5	
114.	17581	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	1128/5	
115.	18441	Farrukhsiyar	'Āẓīmābād	.../5	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 19854.

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
116.	358	Farrukhsiyar	ʻĀẓimābād	1129/6	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.15279.
117.	15278	Farrukhsiyar	ʻĀẓimābād	..../6	
118.	19855	Farrukhsiyar	ʻĀẓimābād	...9/6	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.19856.
119.	359	Farrukhsiyar	ʻĀẓimābād	1130/7	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.15280.
120.	15281	Farrukhsiyar	ʻĀẓimābād	1131/8	
121.	5900	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	1131/*Ahd*	
122.	15293	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	1131/1	
123.	15551	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	113./2	
124.	15296	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	/3	
125.	19862	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	1132/3	
126.	15298	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	1133/3	
127.	5015	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	113./4	
128.	15299	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	..../4	
129.	15300	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	1135/5	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 19131.
130.	19863	Shāhjahān II Rafiu'd Dawla)	ʻĀẓimābād	11../5	
131.	15302	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	..../5	1 more coin, same Shāh date, Acq. no.15350.
132.	15303	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1136/6	
133.	15306	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1137/6	
134.	15304	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	..../6	3 more coins, same date, Acq. no. 15351-53.

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
135.	15308	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	1137/7	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.15309.
136.	15354	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../7	6 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 15355-60.
137.	15310	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../8	9 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 15361- 69.
138.	15312	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../9	2 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 15370- 71.
139.	15316	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	1140/10	
140.	1137	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	114./10	
141.	15318	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../11	
142.	15320	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	1141/11	
143.	15373	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../11	
144.	15323	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	114./12	
145.	15328	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	1143/13	
146.	15324	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../13	
147.	15329	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	114./14	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.15375.
148.	15333	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	1145/15	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.15334.
149.	15332	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../15	
150.	15336	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../16	
151.	419	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	114./19	
152.	15343	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	1150/20	
153.	5939	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	115./20	
154.	15345	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../20	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.15377.
155.	15346	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	..../21	
156.	420	Muḥammad Shāh	ʿĀẓimābād	11../22,	

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
157.	421	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	115/23	
158.	422(i)	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	115/24	
159.	1316	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	..../26	
160.	423(i)	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	115/27	
161.	424(i)	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	..../28	
162.	425	Muḥammad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	..../29	
163.	426(i)	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1161/*Aḥd*	2 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 426(ii)5969
164.	427	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1162/1,	
165.	428	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1162/2	
166.	5970	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1163/3	
167.	7553	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1163	
168.	429	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	..../3	
169.	430	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1164/4	
170.	3288	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	116/4	
171.	431	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1166/6	2 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 14264, 14288.
172.	15795	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	1167/7	
173.	432	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	..../7	
174.	1579	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	x	Date not recorded.
175.	1580	Aḥmad Shāh	ʻĀẓimābād	x	Date not recorded.
176.	6207		ʻĀẓimābād	1167/*Aḥd*	3 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 7208, 7209, 15796.
177.	14265	ʻĀlamgir II	ʻĀẓimābād	1167/1	
178.	433	ʻĀlamgir II	ʻĀẓimābād	1168/1	
179.	7210	ʻĀlamgir II	ʻĀẓimābād	1168/*Aḥd*	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.7211.
180.	7212	ʻĀlamgir II	ʻĀẓimābād	1168/2	2 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 7213, 14267.
181.	7214	ʻĀlamgir II	ʻĀẓimābād	1169/2	3 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 7215, 14268, 14269.
182.	434	ʻĀlamgir II	ʻĀẓimābād	1169/3	2 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 1238, 13660.

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
183.	435	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	1170/3	
184.	6202	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	..../3	
185.	436(i)	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	1170/4	4 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 7216, 14270-72.
186.	437(i)	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	1171/4	6 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 437(2),433(3), 14274-77.
187.	436(ii)	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	..../4	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.436(3).
188.	7217	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	1171/5	10 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 7218, 14278-85, 14289.
189.	438(i)	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	1172/5	4 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 438 (2),7219-20, 14287.
190.	14286	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	.../5	
191.	1239	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	1172/6	2 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 4476, 7508.
192.	7221	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	1173/6	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.7222.
193.	15797	ʿĀlamgir II	ʿĀẓimābād	117./6	
194.	454	Shāhjahān III	ʿĀẓimābād	1174/1	
195.	15799	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	1174/2	
196.	15800	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	117./2	
197.	440	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	..../2	
198.	441	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	1175/3	
199.	1240	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	117./3	
200.	442(1)	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	..../5	
201.	1241	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	..../6	
202.	443	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	..../7	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.1242.
203.	15808	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	1181/8	
204.	441(1)	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	..../8	3 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 442(2), 1243, 15798.
205.	445(1)	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	.../9	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 15813.
206.	446(1)	Shāh ʿĀlam II	ʿĀẓimābād	../10	1 more coin, same date,Acq. no. 1244.

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
207.	6090	Shāh 'Ālam II	'Āẓīmābād	../11	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no. 5893

Akbarnagar Mint

1.	5451	Jahāngīr	Akbarnagar		Date not recorded.
2.	5450	Jahāngīr	Akbarnagar	1015	
3.	6389	Jahāngīr	Akbarnagarad	15	*Mihr*
4.	5452	Jahāngīr	Akbarnagar	17	*Mihr*
5.	5453	Jahāngīr	Akbarnagar	18	*Bahman*
6.	5454	Jahāngīr	Akbarnagar	20	*Dī*
7.	5597	Shāhjahān	Akbarnagar	*/Aḥd*	
8.	5598	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	...8/1	
9.	5599	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	..38/2	
10.	5600	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	1039/3	*Shāhriwār*
11.	258	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	..47/10	
12.	259	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	1050/14	
13.	260	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	..57/21	
14.	261	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	..58/21	
15.	262(1)	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	1058/22	
16.	263(1)	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	..59/22	
17.	264(1)	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	..59/23	
18.	265(1)	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	1060/24	
19.	266	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	1061/24	
20.	267(1)	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	1062/26	
21.	268(1)	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	...4/28	
22.	269	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	65/29	
23.	270	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	..../30	
24.	271	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	1067/31	
25.	272	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	..67/31	
26.	273	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar	./32	
27.	18330	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar		*Tīr*
28.	16843	Shāhajahān	Akbarnagar		*Isfandārmuz* ?
28A.	1237	Shāh Shujā'	Akbarnagar	1068/1	
29.	17627	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../14	
30.	5708	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	1073/6	
31.	15575	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../8	
32.	5009	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	1078/10	
33.	15576	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../11	
34.	15577	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../25	

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
35.	15578	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../26	
36.	15579	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../27	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.15774.
37.	15639	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../28	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.17630.
38.	7429	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../29	
39.	17849	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	1098/30	
40.	18698	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../30	
41.	18338	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../31	
42.	18339	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..99/32	
43.	19185	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	1101/33	
44.	15496	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../33	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.17850.
45.	18340	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	.../34	
46.	15748	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	...2/35	
47.	17631	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	.../35	
48.	8799	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	.../36	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.17632.
49.	17851	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	...4/36	
50.	15640	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../37	1 more coin, same date, Acq. no.17633.
51.	15497	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../38	3 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 17634, 18112, 19298.
52.	15641	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	1105/38	
53.	316	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..07/39	
54.	5709	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	1111/42	
55.	17830	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../42	2 more coins, same date, Acq. nos. 17852, 19179.
56.	7343	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../43	
57.	6363	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../44	
58.	17853	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../45	
59.	17854	Aurangzeb	Akbarnagar	..../47	
60.	344	Shāh ʿĀlam I (Bahādur Shāh)	Akbarnagar	..../2	
61.	5808	Shāh ʿĀlam I (Bahādur Shāh)	Akbarnagar	112/2	
62.	7502	Jahāndār Shāh	Akbarnagar	1124/*Aḥd.*	

REFERENCES

1. See Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib, eds, *CEHI*, I, ch. XII; Aziza Hasan, "The Silver Currency Output of the Mughal Empire and Prices in India during the 16th and 17th Centuries", *IESHR*, VI, pt 1, 1969.
2. The first gold *dīnar* and silver *dirham* which may be called purely Arabic were struck by the Umaiyyad Caliph 'Abdul Malik (685-705) in Damascus in 695.
3. The practice of *khuṭba'* goes back to the very beginnings of Islamic polity, and with the growth of hereditary monarchical trends the right of having the *khuṭba'* read and coins struck in their name came to be exclusively claimed by the Caliph-rulers.
4. This account is given in *Commentaries O Grando Afonso d'Albuquerque*, which was written by Braz d'Albuquerque, son of the famous Portuguese soldier and administrator, which was published in Lisbon in 1557 and subsequently translated into English by De Gray Birch and published by Hakluyt Society. See J.Gerson Da Cunha, "Contributions to the Study of Indo-Portuguese Numismatics", *JBBRAS*, XIV (1880), 267-73 (Part First).
5. This is another valuable piece of new information which, however, does not concern us here.
6. The *Ā'in-i Akabrī*, Eng. tr., H. Blochmann, 2nd edn, revised by D.C. Phillott, Calcutta, 1939, *A'īn*, 4.
7. According to the chemists of the middle ages, gold consists of quick silver and sulphur taken in equal proportions; the latter must, however, possess colouring properties, *vide* the thirteenth *Ā'in*.
8. The date of invasion is not directly stated in the contemporary Persian sources, but it has been worked out to be 1203, A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Allahabad, 1976, p. 70, notes 78-9.
9. *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, Persian text, Calcutta, 1867, p. 151.
10. *Tārīkh-i-Ferishta*, Persian text, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow 1862, p. 293.
11. Such references in the chronicles are rare in regard to the other areas, too, but there are coins from mints in some of those areas.
12. He had travelled from Jaunpur to Bengal passing through Bihar. His notes are based on personal observation, the papers of a *jāgīrdār* in Bihar and the books seen by him in a library at Gaur. He was an observant traveller and has noted down the texts of some inscriptions he saw on the buildings in Bihar. Extracts from the Persian text, along with translation and comments in Urdu, were published by Ilyas Rahmani in *Ma'āsir* (Urdu monthly), Patna, May-June, 1949.
13. *CCIM*, II, p. 60, no. 384.
14. Ibid., II, p. 67, no. 462, pl.VI.
15. *CHB*, I, p. 202.
16. Ibid.
17. Persian Text, ed., Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Aligarh, 1954, p. 150.
18. *AN*, III, p. 321.
19. Ibid., p. 413.
20. H. Nelson Wright, *CCIM*, III, Oxford, 1908; R.B.Whitehead, *CCPM*, Oxford, 1914; C.J. Brown, *CCLM*.
21. One of the earliest issues is a gold coin dated 984 (*IMC*, III, no. 99). The Patna Museum Collection (Appendix IV) has a silver coin issue dated 983 and some others of 42 regnal year onwards.
22. Vide, Appendix IV.
23. *IMC*, III, no. 2095, pl. XVIII, p. M.68.
24. See my article, "The Last Phase of the Patna Mint and Its Winding-Up", *INC*, III(2) and IV(I), 1964-65, 41-51.

25. A somewhat similar pattern is discernible in the history of the working of Patna Factory of the East India Company; see my article, "Commercial-cum-Political Activities of the Patna Factory of the East India Company (1707- 39)", *JBRS*, LXII (1976), pp. 168-83.
26. *Proceedings, Mint Committee*, dated 14 October 1796.
27. See Appendix I.
28. A sum of Rs 3193-12-8 was outstanding against Blake. He had been allowed to draw upon the Collector, Shahabad, for monthly expenses, but not when the cash in hand was sufficient for one month's establishment charges. He had violated this instruction and had drawn upon the Collector, Shahabad, unauthorisedly, and invested the money in his personal indigo trade. Blake had been directed to reimburse the above mentioned amount, and he had done so.
29. Rev. Dept. *Mint Committee Proceedings*, no.1, dated 30 October 1800.
30. The *ṣubadār's* palace, the *Chihil Satun* (Forty-Pillared Hall) stood 1/2 a mile to the east, near the present Chowk *thana*; the *Dāru'-l'Adl* (Court of Justice) stood where the Khwājā Kalān *thana* now stands, and at the back of it was the *maḥalla* where the *Qāzī* lived; the near-by *Sadar Galī*, according to old and knowledgeable local persons, was actually named *Sadru's Sudūr kī galī*. A little to the west, near the old Christian cemetery stood a *maḥalla* named in the old municipal records as *Faujdārī maḥalla*, which obviously housed the criminal court.

    What is a more conclusive supporting evidence is the fact that a small ward called *taksāl*(mint) still stands within the larger area of the Khwāja' Kalān ghāt. Adjacent to it, to the west is the late eighteenth century *dargāh* of Shāh Husain 'Alī. A large number of thin mica discs, some containing bearing impressions of coin-legends, were discovered there during the course of digging for house construction. Our ancestral house stands near-by and these discs were preserved by my grandfather.
31. *AN*, III, 1042. The 17th century dictionary of Mughal *manṣabdārs*, *Zakhīratul Khwānīn*, states that Rājā Man Singh founded a new city named Rajanagar which was re-named Akbarnagar by Akbar. There were frequent outbreaks of fire in the town causing extensive damage to the houses, and so it was also called *Ag maḥal*.

    Akbarnagar was included in the Mughal *ṣuba* of Bengal and was, in fact, its capital for a long time. Now called Rajmaḥal, it forms part of the Sāḥebganj district of Bihar.
32. There is a very rare gold coin of Akbar dated in the *Ilāhī* era, (month) *Farwardīn*, and bearing the mint-name Akbarnagar (*CCPM*, p. 20, no.125). Appendix IV, no. 28A.
33. Shafā'at Aḥmad Khan, *John Marshall in India, Notes and Observations in Bengal 1668-72*, Oxford, 1927, p. 117.
34. These coins of Akbar and Jahāngīr belonged to the collections of Framjee Thanawala, Bombay, and Lieut. Col. Vost, Ind. Med. Service, Lucknow, respectively. They are listed in R.B. Whitehead's article in *JASB*, VIII, 1912, *Numismatic Supplement*, no. XIX, pp. 425-513. The readings are not given and hence the dates of issue cannot be ascertained.
35. These were a sort of mobile mint units accompanying the royal camp. The practice must have existed since earlier times. Mint-workers along with necessary materials and equipments accompanied the royal camp so that on the occasion of military victories special commemorative coins could be issued on the spot.

    We know of Prince 'Ālī Gauhar's (future Shāh 'Alam II) invasions of Bihar during 1759-60 and of his stay in Bihar after his coronation in 1759. The old records of Banaras Mint (vide *infra*, note 69) state that a large number of Banaras mint rupees had then been melted down and coined into *Rikābī* rupees.
36. *JBBRAS*, Centenary Memorial Volume, part VI, pp. 411-36. It was based on the collections of the important Museums. See Appendix II.
37. *JASB*, VIII, 1912, *Numismatic Supplement*, no. 19, See Appendix III.
38. Long ago, around, 1962-63, I was deputed by the Government of Bihar to check the antiquities preserved in the Patna Museum. These included the coins then numbering 20500, of which nearly half were of the Delhi/ regional Sulṭān and Mughal emperors. The

list given here (Appendix IV) has been prepared from the notes then taken. I am thankful to Dr. Hari Kishore Prasad, Director of the Museum, for having enabled me to check these notes recently.

39. *Infra*, Appendix IV.
40. Ibid.
41. 'Afif, *Tāikh-i Fīruz Shāhī (Bibliotheca Indica)*, pp. 344-49. It had been reported to the Sulṭān that some *shashgāni* silver coins had been minted which were deficient in weight by one grain of silver. The *Wazīr* and Mint Master, Kājar Shāh, were called in and on confidential enquiry the charge was found to be correct. As the matter affected the good name of the Sulṭān and the government, it was decided that although the concerned workers (not the Mint Master who was found innocent) were to be punished, a public demonstration was to be so arranged as to show the falsity of the charge. Some goldsmiths were called in. Earlier, by arrangement with charcoal suppliers, one piece of charcoal had been scooped out, filled with some grains of silver, and its mouth sealed with wax. The affected *shashgāni* coins were given to the goldsmith who put them in the crucible and placed it on the fire. As they were blowing the fire the scooped charcoal was quietly passed on to them. The crucible was later put down and allowed to cool. The extra silver having melted in the fire and mixed up with the silver of the coins the deficiency in weight was made up.
42. For some of the more well-known legends on the Mughal coins, see S. Lane-Poole, *CICBM*.
43. Sir Jadunath Sarkar Collection, National Library, Calcutta. I am thankful to Professor A. Das Gupta, the Director, for sending me a transcript of the *Akhbār*. The English translation is mine, prepared with the help of the late Professor A.A. Kazimi, Head, Arabic Department, Patna University.

    The Mughal coins bore a hemistich, not a quatrain obviously for reasons of space. But the incident recorded here is suggestive of the manner in which probably suitable verses were prepared and approved.

    See my article, "A View of Provincial Administration of Bihar under Farrukhsiyar", *JBRS*, I, 1964, pp. 111-24.
44. See *Ā'in*, 5-7.
45. The word has been anglicised as Shroff, meaning, among other things, a dealer in gold, or a money-lender.
46. *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, p. 19. For the application of this method one needed gold pieces of various degrees of fineness. This was done as follows: One *māsha* of pure silver and copper was melted together and allowed to get solid. It was then mixed with 6 *māsha'* of pure gold of $10\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of fineness, of this composition one *māsha* is taken (this *māsha* consists of 6 parts of gold, and 1 part each of silver and copper, i.e., 3/4 gold, 1/4 alloy) and divided into 16 parts of 1/2 *surkh* each. If $7\frac{1}{2}$ *surkhs* of pure gold of $10\frac{1}{2}$ degrees are mixed with one of the sixteen parts of the composition, the touch of the new mixture would only be $10\frac{1}{4}$ *bān*, and so on down the scale up to $6\frac{3}{4}$ *bān*.

    The word *bān*, according to the text, is an abbreviation of *bānwārī*, and a footnote in the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* adds that it means testing of gold.
47. The varying rates for minting and cutting of different fractional units of coins, and the minute splitting of rates of remuneration, down to 11/25 or 14/25 of a *dām*, indicate a great degree of specialization of work, and deserves notice.
48. 25 *jital* were equal to 1 *dām*, *Ā'īn*, 10.

    For purposes of calculation, the *dām* was divided into 40 parts each of which was called a *jītal*. This 'imaginary division' was used only by the accountants. *Ā'īn*, 10.
49. A full list of the gold, silver and copper coins, their weight and value, smaller fractions, etc. is given in the *Ā'īn* but it is added that the 'mercantile affairs in the country' were mostly transacted in the round *muhr* (gold), *rupiyah* (silver) and *dām* (copper).
50. The *yuzbāshis*, or commanders of 100 *sawār* were divided into eleven ranks; every succeeding rank denoted a decrease of 10 in the *sawār* rank, until the eleventh had no *sawār* rank. He received a cash salary. See *Ā'īn*, Book 11, The Army, *Ā'īn*, 3.

51. The work belongs, basically, to the *dastūru'l 'amal* category, but has some other matter, too, more appropriate to the *ādāb* literature.

    It describes the powers and functions of a large number of officials from the *wazir* down to the *waqā'i nigār*, and the *dāroghā* (superintendentship) of some departments, including the *baitu'l mal* and *dāru'l zarb*.

    For a detailed discussion of the *ādāb* portion of this work, see my article, "Some Norms of Social and Economic Behaviour", *IHR*, VIII (1-2), 1982, pp. 19-34.
52. These are general rules and regulations but it is reasonable to assume that local variations existed in regard to the rates of remuneration. As the author of the work belonged to Bihar, it is quite likely that some of the details given by him operated in the Bihar mints.
53. A statement showing the establishment charges of the Assay office at Patna in 1797, soon after the minting work was stopped there, contains an item of contingent expense of Rs 36.00 for firewood, charcoal, etc.
54. This may be compared with the weight given in the *Ā'īn*, according to which the round *muhr* weighed 1 *māsha* and was equal to rupees 9, and the round *rupiyah* weighed $11\frac{1}{2}$ *māsha* and was equal to 40 *dām*.
55. *Mint Committee Proceedings*, no. 4, dated 26 June, 1792. It contains a very detailed account, prepared by G.H. Barlow in 1787, of the working of the Banaras mint; see my article, "An Historical Account of the Banaras Mint in the Later Mughal Period, 1732-1776". *JNSI*, Golden Jubilee number, XXIII, 1961, pp. 198-215.
56. Barlow's account of the Banaras mint, referred to above. Appendix 1.
57. A unit of weight, 8 *chowlies*, or grains = 1 *ratti*, 64 *chowlies*, or 8 *ratti* = 1 *māsha*, 96 *ratti*, or 12 *māsha*= 1 *tola*. One standard Banaras *sicca* rupee weighed 630 *chowlies* or 9 *māshā*, 6 *rattis*, 6 *chowlies*.
58. Barlow's Account, Appendix 1.
59. Ibid., Appendix II.
60. For a very informative early account of the coinage under the E.I.Co. See E. Thurston, "Note on the History of the East India Company's Coinage, 1753-1853", *JASB*, LXII, 1893, 52-84.
61. See also pp. 218-19 above and p. 232 below.
62. The collection has not yet been catalogued; only some particulars of coins are noted in the Stock Register. See Appendix IV, Serial no.1. Two other coins of this date and mint are listed in *CCPM*.

    The honorific title of Patna mint, *dāru'l ẓarb*, is quite clear; of Patna, only the first letter is legible.
63. *CCPM*.
64. *JASB*, XI, 1915, *Numismatic Supplement*, XXVI, 496.
65. H.S. Hodivala, *Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics*, Calcutta, 1923, pp. 177-85.
66. *CCPM*, Plate XXI, no. XVI.
67. A few other specimens are also known, see *British Museum Catalogue*, pp. 690-91; *CCPM*.
68. The coin belongs to the British Museum collection, see *Catalogue*, p. 147, no. 742(a).
69. For further details, see *CCPM*, p. xxv.
70. *JASB*, VIII, 1912, *Numismatic Supplement*, no. XVII, pp. 124-27.
71. The coin belongs to the Patna Museum Collection, and it was purchased from Mr. C.J. Brown of Lucknow in 1925; vide Appendix IV, serial no.121.
72. The coin belongs to the Patna Museum Collection, see Appendix IV, serial no. 194.
73. See my article, "An Historical Account of the Banaras Mint in the later Mughal Period, 1732-1776", *JNSI*, Golden Jubilee Volume, 1961, pp. 198-215.

    The enquiries related to (a) the working of the mint, especially the duties and wages of different workers, changes in it, etc., and (b) the connection between the mint and the *zarī* workers. We are concerned here with the latter aspect.
74. See my article, "Banaras Mint and the *zarī* industry", *JNSI*, XXV, 1963, pp. 87-92.

75. He was the *dārogha* of the Banaras mint, Cawn (sic) Das had held the farm of the mint for some time.
76. The fees for ingots made from different kinds of silver varied; for a *passa*, or the ingots made from (*chāndī*) silver, it was Rs 2, *annas* 8 per 100 *tola*; for *jennis* or ingots made from silver obtained from *sicca* rupees of Calcutta, Patna, Murshidabad and Banaras mints, Rs 2.00 per 100 *tola*; for that made from silver obtained from *sanaut* rupees, *annas* 15, per 100 *tola*; and that from silver obtained from burnt embroidery and *cheda* fragments of *passa* Rs 1, *annas* 5, *pies* 6, per 100 *tolas*.

    A discount of $1\frac{1}{2}$ *anna* was allowed on the last two varieties in favour of the firms of Gopal Das and Goal Das, and Umi Chand Cawn (*sic*) as their ancestors had been connected with the mint.

    A merchant on entering into the grade and being permitted to send his silver into the mint for being converted into *passa* had to pay Rs 70.00 as entrance money. 4/5th of the amount was credited to the Government's account and 1/5th distributed among mint workers. Rather surprisingly, Muslims and up-country traders in general enjoyed some special discounts.
77. The *chaudharies* of *taneeas* got Re 1.00 from every person engaged in the trade, *annas* 8 and some sweets from every apprentice on his entrance, and one *tunga*(?) in a rupee on all sums paid to workers employed through their agency. The rate for *chaudharies* of *chupereeas* varied slightly; Re 1.00 from each apprentice, the rest was as above. The *chaudharies* of *Batunharas* received *annas* six from each apprentice and 2 pices per month from the traders in lace.

    All the gold used for manufacturing was weighed in the mint on payment of a government duty of *annas* three (per *tola*?). The *Powteeas* had to get the ingots they received from merchants checked first by the *dārogha* of the mint.
78. *Mint Committee Proceedings*, no.15 dated 25 May 1802.
79. The older part of the city still has *maḥallas* named *Zargartoli* and *Ẓarābtoli* which housed workers engaged in the manufacture of gold/silver threads, the making of *ṭabag* or flattened thin silver foils and those working in the mints.
80. *JNSI*, XXIII, p. 201.

16

The Vatan-System in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Century Deccan: Towards a New Concept of Indian Feudalism

HIROYUKI KOTANI

I. *The Concept of Feudalism*

In this essay, I want to discuss the universality and peculiarity of Indian feudalism by analysing the historical sources of the sixteenth-eighteenth century Deccan.[1] A controversy is raging as to whether the concept of feudalism is applicable to the history of Indian society. (See, e.g., R.S. Sharma 'How feudal was Indian Feudalism', *Social Scientist*, no.129, February, 1983, 16-41.) This problem depends on how you define feudalism.

The general concept of feudalism can be summarized as follows.

1. Direct producers are basically peasants who hold land sufficient to maintain their families, but the amount of land does not exceed that which can be cultivated by family labour forces without the help of subordinate labourers like slaves. Their title to the land they cultivate is that of occupation under the proprietorship of landlord class, so they can not be evicted so long as they pay rent to their landlord. In the case of a developed feudal society, peasants' title to the land they cultivate attain the character of *de facto* proprietorship under *dejure* proprietorship of a landlord class.

2. The exploiting class stands above the direct producers. These exploiters are called landlord class, because they claim proprietorship right over the land which peasants cultivate.

3. The landlord-peasant relationship, in consequence, is the most basic feature of feudalism. The general framework of understanding this relationship is that landlord, as the legitimate owners of land, can claim rent from the peasants who cultivate the land. But landlords cannot extract rent from their peasants by normal economical methods, because peasants are independent in the production process from their landlords (i.e., they own basically all the means of production). So, landlords have to have recourse to what is commonly called non-economic compulsion, which comprises armed retinues and judicial rights of landlord over the peasants.

This concept of feudalism is a well-known and universally accepted one, and is derived mainly from historical facts in medieval Europe. Of course, the concept itself is not a historical fact, but it is an abstraction from historical facts. As this concept of feudalism embodies the peculiarity of European history, it is

not proper to use it as the criterion or norm with which to decide whether a society is feudal or not.

We should try to analyse, at first, the basic social relationships peculiar to a society. Who are the direct producers? What sort of relationship do they have with land or nature? Who are the exploiting class? What sort of rights do they have to surplus products? What is the fundamental framework with which to understand the relationship between the direct producers and the exploiting class? These are the problems to be solved before a society be labelled feudal. Only through analysing the peculiarities of various medieval or pre-capitalist societies, can we build solid base on which to try to develop a universal concept of feudalism free from European prejudice.

This essay has two aims. First, I want to discuss the peculiarities of social relationship in medieval Indian society by taking up the sixteenth-eighteenth century Deccan as the special subject of my analysis, because a multitude of historical material in the Marathi language have been published and it is now possible to delineate the social structure. Second, after clarifying the peculiarities of social relationship in Indian medieval society, I will try to place it in the general framework of feudalism, and in the process, modify the above-mentioned (Eurocentric) concept of feudalism.

II. *Land Arrangement in Village and Peasant Land-holdings*

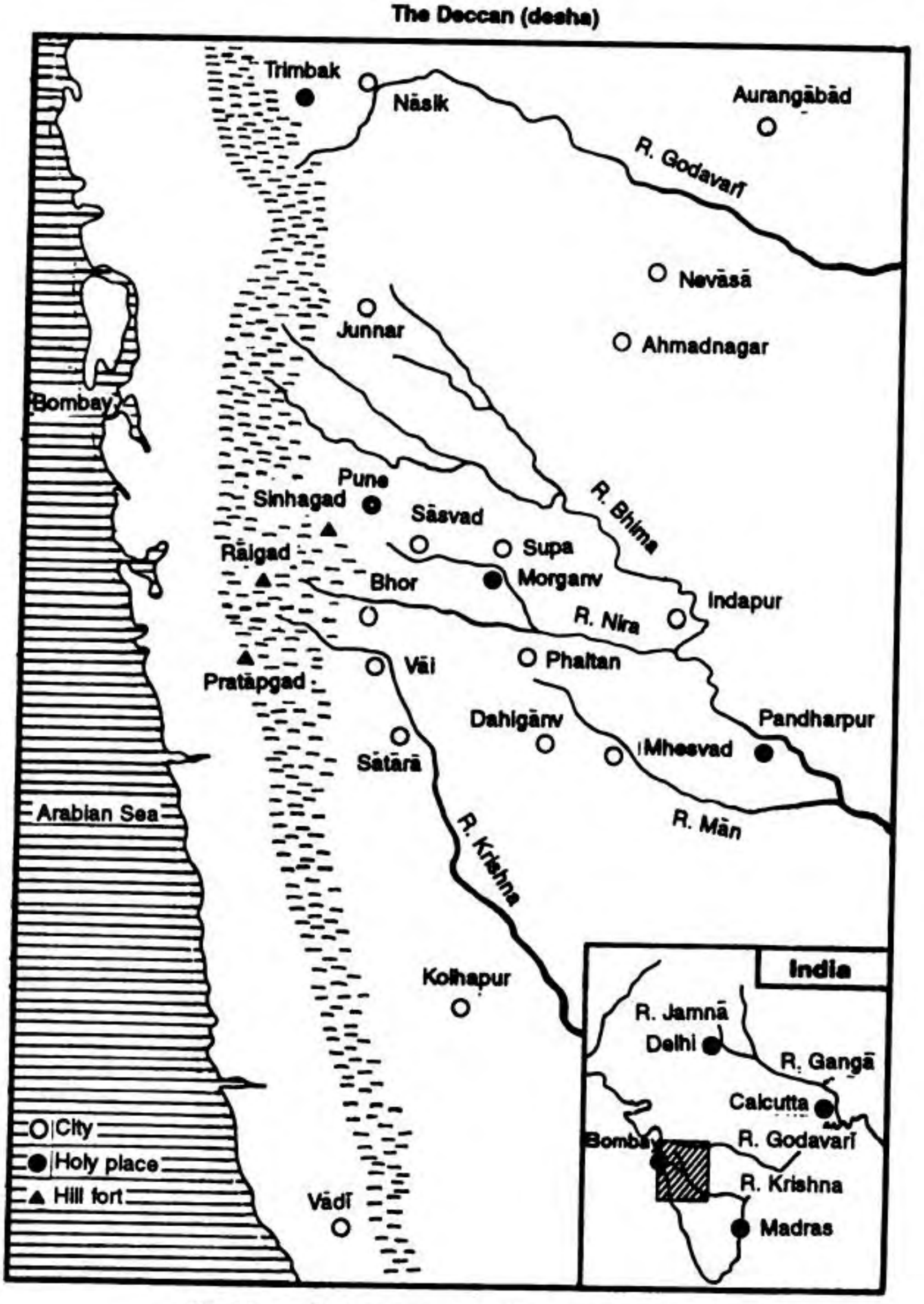
1. *Land Arrangement in Village:* It is still rather difficult to show the actual conditions of land-holdings and land-management of peasants in medieval India, due to a lack of adequate historical source materials. But through the *inām-patra* (land grant deeds), it is possible to get some idea of land-holdings and land-management of peasants in the later medieval Deccan.

In the *inām-patra*, we often see that the same lands were indicated by two different types of denominations. One unit or type of denomination is *bīghā* or *cāvar* (1 *cāvar* = 120 *bīghā*) which denotes without doubt land area (square measure), and the other is *rukā* (*kās rukā*) or *takā* (*kās takā*, 1 *takā* = 48 *rukā*), the meaning of which is a little ambiguous. Table I shows contents of the *inām-patras* given to Moreśvar temple, the village Morgānv, *parganah* Karhepathār, *prant* Pune, during AD1647-54.[2]

In Table I, we find 4 pieces of land indicated by the two types of denominations. In these 4 cases, one *cāvar* corresponds to 7, 12, 12, and 1 *rukā* respectively. It means that there is no correlativity between the two types of denominations and that, consequently, *rukā* indicated something other than land area (square measure). If so, what did *rukā* indicate?

Table I
Inām land given to Moreśvar Temple

Village	*Thal*	*Cāvar*	*Rukā*	Cultivator
Morgānv	Thopatyā	1	7	
Mayevādī	Vāgtenbhi	1/2	6	Malhārji Jagthāp
Naygānv	Paritdhune	1/2	6	Nāgoji Borkar
Pandhare		1	1	Goyāji Dhangar



The Vatan System in the 16th-18th Century Deccan

In medieval Deccanese villages, land was divided into about a dozen *thal* (from the Sanskrit word *sthala* meaning place), and a specific number of *rukā* was attached to each *thal*. We will take the village Morgānv as an example. This village consisted of 11 *thals* and had, in all, 295 *rukā*.[3] (See Table II.)

Table II
Thal of the Village Morgānv (AD1698)

Name of thal	*Rukā in all*	*Rukā of Khālisa land*	*Rukā of inām land*
Tāvir	35	28.5	6.5
Pacham	36	36	0
Chyāhāl	32	25	7
Kad	32	28.5	3.5
Koltā	39	39	0
Pachpatyā	48	44.5	3.5
Thopatā	15	8	7
Khomnā	19	12	7
Manyā	15	6	9
Pusālā	12	0	12
Kāvji Bopāji	12	5	7
Total	295	232.5	62.5

The *thal* itself consisted of several pieces of land, to each of which a specific number of *rukā* was attached. As an example, the composition of Pachpatyā *thal* of the village Morgānv is shown in Table III.[4]

We find in Table III that this *thal* contained 7 pieces of land, each of which consisted of a few kinds of land with varying degree of fertility. Each land piece corresponds to one unit of peasant land-holding except land piece 7 which contained only uncultivated and barren lands. (Perhaps land piece 3 and 4 belong to the same peasant.) This means that each peasant had a specific number of *rukā* regardless of the acreage of his land.

Table III
Pachpatyā *thal* (AD 1776)

Peasant land holding	*Rukā*	*Land area in bīghā*			
I	23	1	230 *bīghā*	First class Second class Rocky and Third class	180 *bīghā* 40 *bīghā* *10 bīghā*
II	6	2	145.25 *bīghā*	Second class Third class	50 *bīghā* 95.25 *bīghā*
III	3.5 (*inām*)	3 4	23.75 *bīghā* 33.75 *bīghā*	1.5 *rukā* First class 2 *rukā* Second class	57.5 *bīghā*

IV	3.5 (*inām*)	5	64.5 *bīghā*	First class Second class Third class	35 *bīghā* 20 *bīghā* 9.5 *bīghā*
V	12 (*inām*)	6 7	194.75 *bīghā* 35.5 *bīghā*	First class 120 *bīghā* Second class 74.75 *bīghā* Uncultivated and hilly land	230.25 *bīghā*

This type of denomination of land in *rukā* had a close relationship with the tax system of medieval Deccanese governments under which taxes were levied on villages as a whole. In villages, the gross sum of taxes was allotted to each peasant according to the number of *rukā* he held. So, the number of *rukā* shows the tax each peasant was supposed to be responsible for as a ratio of all taxes levied on the village. For example, the peasant land-holding I of Table III owed theoretically 23/295 of all taxes levied on Morgānv village as a whole. But actual process of allocation of taxes to each peasant was a little more complicated. In a source material pertaining to the village Nehatni in *parganah* Pune[5] (AD 1671) we can find the actual process of allocation given in some detail.

This village consisted, in all, of 625 *rukā*.

Khāliṣa lands (from which taxes were paid to the state)

	.....	332 *rukā*
jīrātī (unwatered land)		286 *rukā*
bāgāitī (watered land)		30
kuran (meadow land)		12
pāndhari (residence area)		4
		332 *rukā*
Inām lands		293 *rukā*
	Total	625 *rukā*

On this village the following taxes were levied.

Aen nakht (cash tax)	191.75
Bābā nakht (tax in kind but commuted to cash)	306.75
Tabakhū (tobacco tax)	8.00
Total	506.50 *hon*

In this year (AD 1671) 46 *hon* being deducted from this sum, actual taxes levied was 460.5 *hon*. On the other hand, the total number of *rukā* of this village was 625, but after deductions from this number of tax-free land of *mahār* (11 *rukā*), *kuran* (meadow, 12 *rukā*) and tax-free land of Sheikh Salā (15 *rukā*), numbers of tax-bearing *rukā* was 587. Thus all taxes levied on this village as a whole were divided into 587 portions. The consequence was as follows.

Aen nakht ... 1.5 *hon* to each *sajgānī* (= 6 *rukā*)

Bābā nakht ... 2.75 *hon* to each *sajgānī*

Accordingly, if one peasant had land denominated 6 *rukā* in this village, he was responsible for the payment of *Aen nakht* 1.5 *hon* and *Bābā nakht* 2.75 *hon*, in all, 4.25 *hon*.

He might not pay this sum to the village community directly, because each *thal* had joint responsibility for the sum of taxes allotted to the *thal* according to the number of *rukā* attached to it. Therefore peasants seemed to pay, at first, their share of taxes to the *thal* to which they belonged and if some members of the *thal* happened to fail to pay, other members were jointly responsible for the arrears.

In this way, villagers had joint responsibility for the payment of taxes on two-fold levels, that is, on the level of *thal* and village at large.

2. *Land-holdings and Land-management of the Peasants: What was the reason the taxes which each peasant had to bear were regulated by the number of rukā*, and not by the acreage of each peasant land-holding? We should seek the reason in the peculiarity of agricultural conditions in the medieval Deccan. We will take up Tables I, III and IV, and try to get some idea about actual conditions of agriculture and peasant land-holdings.

When the state decided to give an *inām* to someone, the state ordered local officials to proceed to the village concerned and to 'decide the boundaries of land to be granted and then name the cultivator (*prajā*).[6] In Tables I and IV we find some cultivators so named by local officials. Thus the real meaning of a grant of *inām* land was that the cultivator, whose income was supposed to correspond to the intended sum of the grant, was selected by state officials, and then he had to pay to the *inām* holder taxes which he had previously paid to the state.

Table IV
Inām l and with the name of cultivator

	Year (AD)	*Rukā*	*Land area (Cāvar)*	*Cultivator*	*Source*
1.	1592-93	12		Ahmad Patel	*MIS* XV-366
2.	1622		1	Tān Patel	*SCS* XII-120
3.	1622-23,		1	Bābāji Mūlānah	*MIS* XV-394
4.	1627-28		2	Nāg Patel	*MIS* XX-206
5.	1641		3	Lakhman Dhangar	*SCS* III-660
6.	1644-45		1	Sukābdā Satvāji	*MIS* XX-208
7.	1649		1	Dhāroji Khaerā	*SCS* II-152
8.	1649-50		1¼	Tukoji Karpyā	*MIS* XX- 209
9.	1655	24		Padmāji Honap	*SCS* II-130

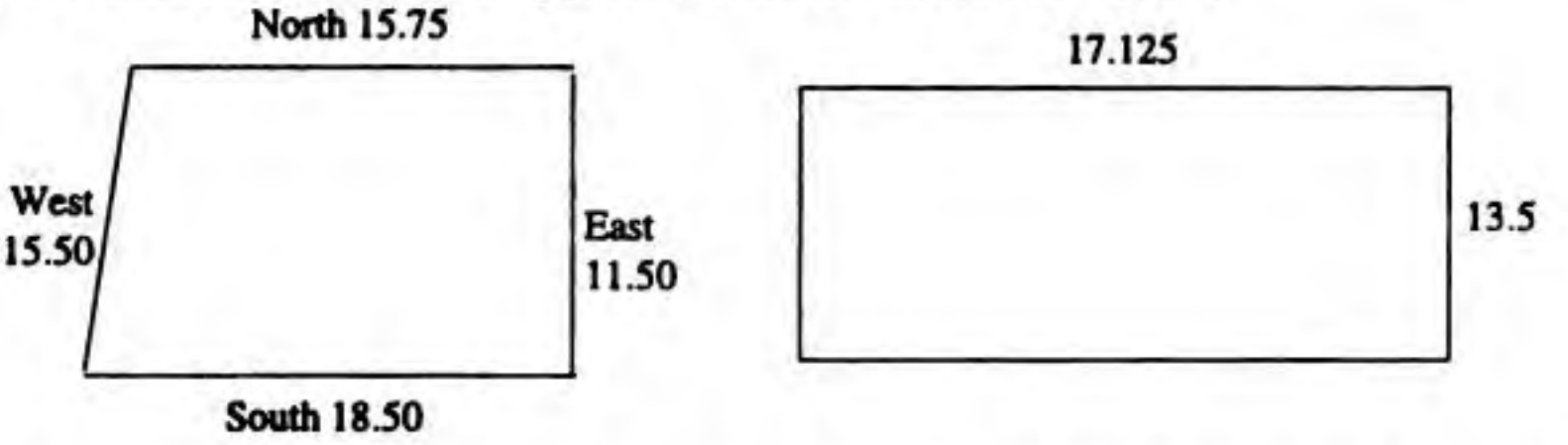
If this proposition be accepted, each of the *inām* lands in Tables I, III and IV corresponded to one peasant land-holding and, consequently, peasant land-holdings I and II of the Table III also constituted separate peasant land-holdings. When we see Tables I, III and IV afresh here, we find a rather astonishing fact in them. That is, the land-holdings of cultivators (peasants) were very large and quite roughly denominated. One *cāvar* being equivalent to nearly 30 hectares, the land-holdings of cultivators in Tables I, III and IV were 15 hectares at the smallest and 90 hectares at the largest. There are many more source materials

which show that peasant land-holdings in the medieval Deccan were very large.[7] Moreover, these large peasant land-holdings were not scattered over a wide area in many small parcels, but formed one compact lot of land. In the case of the peasant land-holding I of Table III, land measurement was shown as follows.[8]

North	15.75	West	15.5
South	18.5	East	11.5
	34.25		27
divided into halves	17.125		13.5

$17.125 \times 13.5 = 230$ *bīghā*

This measurement shows that the land was one compact lot of land, the shape of which might be like the following, and that the acreage of this land was calculated as a rectangular piece of land as illustrated below.

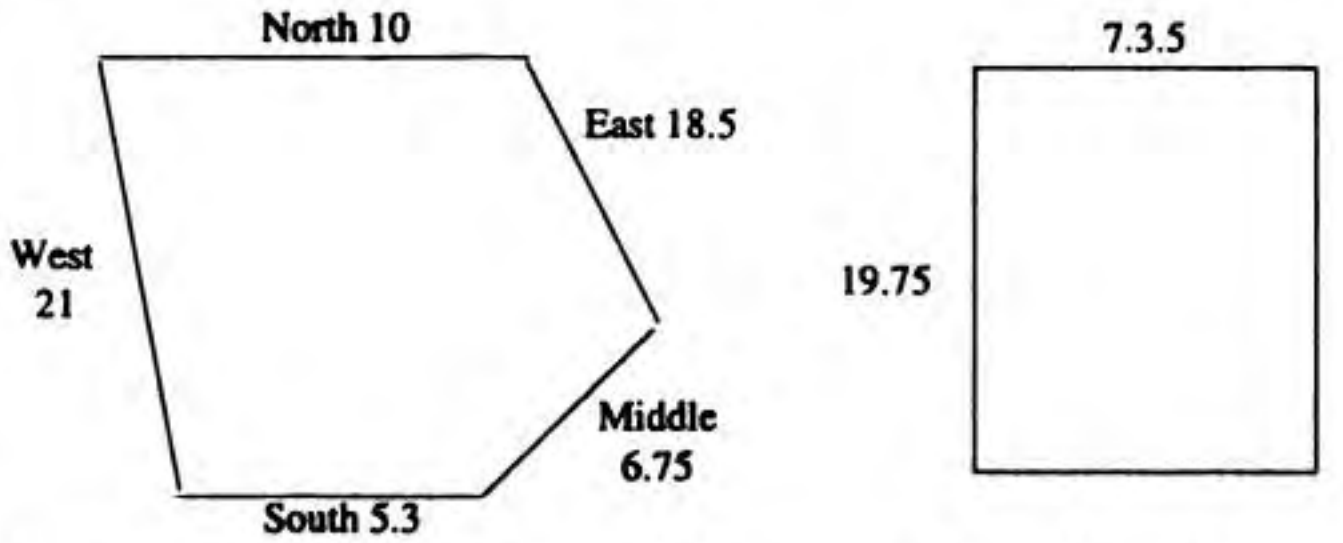


Again, in the case of the peasant land-holding II of Table III, land measurement was shown as follows.[9]

North	10	East	18.5
South	5.3	West	21
Middle	6.75		39.5
	22.05		
divided into three parts.	7.35	divided into halves	19.75

$7.35 \times 19.75 = 145.25$ *bīghā*

This measurement shows that the shape of this peasant land-holding was like the pentagon drawn below, but it was transfigured, on paper, to the following rectangular form so as to make calculation easy.



This type of rough calculation of the acreage of land could have meaning only in a locality where land was so abundant in proportion to the population

that the amount of land held by peasants was very large and not parcelled into small lots.

Thus we can understand that peasant land-holdings in the medieval Deccan were lumped together in large compact lots of land.[10]

How did peasants manage these large lots of land from 15 to 90 hectares? In this respect, one problem is the nature of the family in medieval India. In many sociological studies, it is indicated that the basic form of the family among the Hindus is the joint family (extended family). But there are practically no historical sources which show that the Hindu family in history was a joint-family. It is rather more proper to think that the basic family form in medieval India was a nuclear family, that is, parent with some children. According to a paper on *jizya* in *parganah* Nevasa (AD 1684-85),[11] there were 144 villages in this *parganah*, but 74 villages being exempted due to desolation, *jizya* was only levied from 70 villages. In these 70 villages, there were, in all, 564 families with 957 male members. From these 957 males, young, physically handicaped and aged men being deducted, there remained 563 grown-up and healthy males in 525 families. This means that each family, in general, had only one grown-up and healthy male member, and that the basic form of the family was not the joint-family.[12]

Thus in the medieval Deccan, a very large amount of land was managed by nuclear family peasants. From this fact, we can infer that agriculture in the medieval Deccan was not intensive, but extensive. In this regard, it is quite suggestive that we see in *inām patras*, items of income like *tūp* (*ghee* = clarified butter) and *kadbā* (a bundle of hay) along with cash and grain. For example, in the list of items of income from the *inām* land given in the village Pasarni, *parganah* Vāi, we see 4 *man* 19 *sher* of *tūp* and 176 bundles of hay along with 13.75 *hon* of cash and 17 *man* 22 *sher* of grain.[13] From these sources we can infer with some certainty that in the medieval Deccan agriculture was closely combined with cattle breeding and a considerable portion of the land held by peasants was used as *kuran* (meadow land) or grazing land for cattle. Thus in any peasant land-holding only small portions of the total area was used for cultivation and the method of cultivation was to shift from one section of the holding to another from year to year.

Under these circumstances, it is almost meaningless to measure minutely the acreage of land which each peasant held and taxes levied according to the acreage of his land. Given this condition, the amount of labour force which each peasant family can command, regardless of the acreage of his land-holding, plays the decisive role. This means that in connection with deciding how the taxes levied on a village as a whole should be divided it is more proper to allocate the taxes according to the amount of labour force than to the acreage of land held by each peasant. Thus a unit which shows the tax-bearing capacity of each peasant (which might correspond to the amount of labour force contained in the family) was devised and that was *rukā*. *Rukā* therefore had the function of

ensuring a kind of fairness in the allocation of taxes among the members of a village community. It was this mechanism of allocation within the community that made it possible for the village to survive the heavy pressure imposed by the state.[14]

III. *Community-Structure of Local Society*

1. *Plural and Stratified Structure of Communities*: The general image of Asiatic Society which has been nourished in the social sciences of modern Europe including Marxism, is that there are numerous village communities at the bottom of society which are completely isolated from each other, and over these village communities the state reigns as the sole binder of otherwise scattered units of society. Indian society has been understood within this framework, because it has been regarded as the archetypical Asiatic society.[15]

But this image of Indian society is quite far from reality. In the later medieval Deccan, community structure was not unitary like that of village community but plural and stratified, and moreover, class relations were contained in these communities themselves.

(i) Village Community: No doubt, there was a village at the base of community structure. In the Deccan, the membership of a regular member of village community was denoted as *vatan*. A peasant as a regular member of a village was known as *vatandār kunbi*, while a temporary tenant introduced from outside a village was denoted as *upārī kumbī* (outsider peasant).[16] In the village, there was one set of artisans known as *bārā balute* (12 balute artisans), which generally included a *sutār* (carpenter), *lohār* (black-smith), *kunbhār* (potter), *canbhār* (skinner), *nhāvi* (barber), *parīt* (washerman), *joshī* (astrologer), *mahār* (untouchable) and *māng* (untouchable), and in some cases *gurav* (Hindu temple keeper), *sonār* (gold-smith) and some others. These artisans were denoted as *vatandār* like *vatandār sutār*, when they were regarded as the regular members of the village. In case, a *sutār* was given *vatan* of *sutār* (*sutārkī vatan*) temporally from the village, he was denoted as a *upārī sutār* (outsider carpenter). These artisans were maintained by the villages as a whole and were given an annual payment of grains or cash, or an allotment of a small portion of village land free from tax or any other charge.[17]

The primary division of labour inside the village was between *vatandār kunbī* and *bārā balute*. In many source materials, we see a phrase *sāthī prajā va bārā balute*[18] (60 peasants and 12 sorts of artisans) which refers to all the members of a village. This phrase shows that in the later medieval Deccan, the ideal ratio of division of labour between peasants and artisans was regarded as 60 peasants with 12 sorts of artisans. In this primary division of labour money was not the intermediary in the relationship between men (peasants) and men (artisans).

In the village, there were several other *vatandārs* besides *vatandār kunbī* and *bārā balute*. In the first place, there were village leaders like *patel* (village head-man), *kulkarṇī* (accountant) and *caugulā*. They had *vatan* of their own like *patelkī vatan* and *kulkarṇīpan vatan*. Then there were some commodity producers and sellers who were not maintained by the village as a whole, like

telī (oil-man), *tānbolī* (seller of *pānspārī*), *mālī* (gardener) and *koshtī* (weaver). These commodity producers and sellers were admitted into a village by being given the *vatan* of each trade. In case of *telī*, e.g., only the member of the *telī jāti* (caste) who was given *telī vatan* by a village could open an oil shop in the village. It means that even members of the *telī jāti* could not do their work in a village without being given *telīvatan* from the village. By this arrangement village community could control the development of the commodity economy inside the village. Division of labour between peasants and these commodity producers and sellers formed the secondary division of labour inside the village.

Thus the framework of division of labour inside the village consisted of various *vatandārs*, and outside a set of *vatandārs* there existed a body of *upāris*. This system of village community formed by the *vatandārs* often became deficient, because of changes in the life cycle of *vatandārs* or devastation from famine and war. It was the role of the *upāri* to fill the deficiency thus brought about and maintain and bolster the village system.

(ii) *Parganah* Community: Indian village community has been often regarded as an isolated and independent unit of society. But it might have been quite difficult for the village community to survive had it been isolated. The village community in medieval India was, in reality, a rather unstable institution. To make up for this instability, several tens of village communities grouped together and formed an upper-level of community structure. This upper level of community structure corresponded to the extent of "*parganah* community". The "*paraganah* community" consisted usually of 20 to 60 villages. Leaders of this community were *deshmukh* and *deshpānde*, and they had their own *vatan* like *deshmukhī vatan*. When any dispute occurred in a "*parganah* community", *deshmukh* called and presided over a meeting of the "*parganah* community" which was known as *gotsabhā* (The president of *got sabhā* was called *sabhānaik*.). Even law suits submitted to the state were often entrusted to *got sabhā*. Especially, the inheritance, purchase and transfer of *vatan* had to be confirmed by *got sabhā*. Decision and confirmation by *got sabhā* was recorded in *got mahzar* which was written by *deshpānde* and signed by the participants.

(iii) *Jāti* Community: While the village community and "*parganah* community" formed vertically stratified structure, the "*jāti* community" had horizontal and trans-village structure. Each *jāti* (caste group) formed a primary group within *parganah* which is called the "*jāti* community" here. In every *parganah*, there were heads of "*jāti* communities", like *sutār mhetar* (head of carpenter caste). These heads exercised control over the members of his "*jāti* community". They had their own *vatan*, like *sutār mhetarkī vatan* by which they could take a small perquisite from the members of their *jāti*. When any problem arose which disturbed their *jāti*, e.g., in relation with the state, the *mhetar* as the representative of the *jāti* negotiated with the state. In AD 1649-50, the state ordered the *canbhār* (skinner) *jāti* of *parganah* Supa to pay tax in cash instead of tax in kind, namely, in shoes made of skin which used to be levied. The *mhetar* of *canbhār jāti* appealed to the state to be allowed to pay tax in kind as before, and obtained an order from the state which approved the appeal and ordered the

members of *canbhār jāti* of *parganah* Supa to act under the guidance of this *mhetar*.[19]

"*Jāti* Community", thus, formed the primary group in the extent of *parganah* firstly and then formed the secondary relaltion with the same "*jāti* community" of the neighbouring *parganah*. For example, when a dispute occurred with respect to the customary rule of marriage between the *sinpī* (tailor) of *parganah* Sāsvad and *parganah* Pune, the members of the two "*jāti* community" held a meeting (*jāti sabhā*) and settled the problem.[20]

But, among "*jāti* communities", there were some *jātis* which had a different structure from these *parganah*-wise *jāti*. The so-called untouchable *jāti* like *mahār* and *māng*, and the *ādivāsī* (tribes) like *kolī*, *ramosī* and *bhīl* were supposed to be the original inhabitants of the Deccan, small portions of which had been absorbed in the lowest stratum of the newly developed agricultural village as scavengers or village watchmen (thus as the untouchables). But much greater portions of them dwelt, still, in the hills outside the villges, and they had close relations with their brethren within the villages. Accordingly, these "*jāti* communities" had a sort of tribal structure which went beyond the limit of *parganah*. This structure gave these *jātis* a mobile and militant character, because of which some heads of these *jātis* obtained *nāikvādī* (keeper of hill forts) *vatan*.

Thus the community structure of local society in the medieval Deccan was plural and stratified as a complex of vertically organized community structure (village community — "*parganah* community") and horizontally organized community structure ("*jāti* community" — tribes). And, at the same time, a "*parganah* community" was connected with other "*parganah* communities" nearby, and a "*jāti* community", also, had relation with the same "*jāti* community" of the neighbouring *parganah*. Only within these complicated network of community structures, could village community reproduce itself with some stability. In this sense, the village community in medieval India was not isolated, nor self- sustained as imagined in the European mode of thought.

2. *Vatan-system as the Basis of the Social Formation*: As stated before, the community structure of local society was plural and stratified, but the principle which regulated the community structure at the bottom was *vatan*. Thus it is appropriate to call the structure of local society in the medieval Deccan as a *vatan*-system.

The *vatan*-system primarily indicated a division of labour (system of parts or roles). The most fundamental form of the *vatan*-system was the division of labour between the *vandār kunbī* and *bārā balute*, but when a body of "free commodity producers" began to come into existence as a result of the development of productivity and division of labour within local society, the *vatan*-system came to include a division of labour based on the exchange of commodities. Thus a secondary *vatan* like *telī vatan* was formed. An *abhaya patra* (letter of guarantee) given to a *tānbholī* from the *patel* of the village Garade, *parganah* Pune (AD 1783) clearly shows the role of secondary *vatan*. The relevant passage reads:

> You proceeded before me and stated. "If you give me the *tānbholī vatan* of this village, I will reside in this village, open shop and enjoy the *vatan*". Therefore, the *tānbholī vatan* of this village was given to you, and *vatan* land was allotted to you ... you pay two rupees yearly to the state as the tax and live happily.[21]

These holders of secondary *vatan* were not maintained by the village as a whole like *bārā balute*. They sold their commodities in the village and lived on their earning. But they could not carry on their business in the village without being given *vatan* from the village.

Primarily, the relation between community leaders (*deshmukh*, *deshpānde*, *patel* and *kulkarṇī*) and peasants as well as the relation between *jāti* leader (*mhetar*) and *jāti* members, also, exhibited a division of labour (relation of office). But these *vatans*, especially, that of *deshmukh* and *patel*, had a tendency to be separated from their office and become private property. As a result of this tendency, *vatan* became objects that could be divided, sold and transferred freely in the course of the sixteenth century at the latest.

In the document written at the time of division of the *deshmukhī vatan* of Jedhe *deshmukh* (Bhor, *prant* Pune) among five brothers (AD 1659-60), the following items of perquisite were enumerated.[22]

1. Shawls, commuted to cash payment of 505 *takā*
2. Sist sālābād, commuted to cash payment of 219.75 *takā*
3. Curds, commuted to cash payment of 13.75 *takā*
4. Goats for *Dasara*, commuted to cash payment of 42 *takā*
5. Bedsteads from *stār*, commuted to cash payment of 45.75 *takā*
6. *Rābnuk* (labour) from *mahār*, commuted to cash payment of 18.75 *takā*
7. *Sotra* from *grav*, commuted to cash payment of 2.75 *takā*

These perquisites seem to be, primarily, the tribute offered to the headman of the "*parganah* community" (*deshmukh*) from the members of the community. These items of tribute must have been paid formerly either in kind or by rendering labour service. But in the seventeenth century almost all of them came to be commuted to cash payment. Thus tribute to the head of a community began to change and it gradually came to assume the character of cash perquisite. In this process of change, these *vatans* came to be regarded as private property and *vatans* like *deshmukhī* and *patelkī* began to be sold and purchased frequently and were accumulated in the hands of one and the same person.

Along with this process, new *vatans* which had nothing to do with the division of labour within local community were newly created by the state and given to the state officials or local leaders. *Sardeshmukhī*, *sarpatelkī* and *nāikvādī* were some of these new *vatans*. These *vatans*, having no part in the division of labour in local society, were purely the private property of the grantees. But, as long as they were *vatans*, the perquisite accompanying the *vatan* was levied directly from local society in addition to the taxes due to the state. Thus the *vatan*-system, which had primarily only accommodated the relations of the division of labour, was enlarged to contain all relations of

exploitation within local society. (Table V shows the structure of the *vatan*-system).

Then what was the reason that the *vatan*-system came to incorporate the relation of exploitation? The reason seems to be as follows. With the development of productivity, the 'social surplus' began to be accumulated within local society, but this 'social surplus' could not take the form of landed property in the medieval Deccan. In a society where land had a value in itself and one could appropriate the labour of other people by holding the title to a piece of land, social development might be expressed in the change or development of the form of landed property. But, as stated before, in the medieval Deccan, land was abundant in proportion to the population. In this type of society, a social system based on the principle of landed property was difficult to develop, so the 'social surplus' created by the development of productivity within local society transformed into the perquisites of community leaders. These *vatans* thus turned into a kind of private property. In this process, community leaders like *deshmukh* and *patel* began to be transformed into the ruling and exploiting class within local society.[23]

Table V
Vatan-system

Paraganah		*Parganah*	
	Deshmukh		*Sardeshmukh*
I	*Deshpānde*	II	*Sardeshpānde*
	Mhetar of a *jāti*		Sarpatel
			Sarkulkarṇī
Village		Market town	
	Patel		Set (head of market)
	Kulkarṇī	II	*Mahājan* (accountant of market)
I	*Caugulā*		
	Vatandār kunbī		
	Bārā balute		
		Fort	
	Telī	II	*Nāikvādi*
II	*Tāṁbholī* etc.		

I = Primary *vatan* II = Secondary *vatan*

IV. *Class-Relations in Local Society*

1. *Formation of 'Local Lord' Class*: In 1674, Shivaji was crowned at Raigad and took the title of *Chatrapati* of the Maratha Kingdom. The moving force behind the formation of the Maratha Kingdom was the 'local lord' class consisting mostly of *deshmukh* families in the so-called *desha* districts of the Deccan. With the transformation of the *vatan* form of social organization, *deshmukhs* had been gradually emerging as the ruling class of local society. And, at the same time, they began to play a vital role in the machinery of state at the local level. *Deshmukhs* got various emoluments from the state as rewards for their civil and military services. The principal forms of their emoluments were: (1) *jāgīr* (or *mokāsā*, *saranjām*)—a right to take the amount corresponding

to the taxes of the state from the designated *parganah*. *Jāgīr*, being annexed to the office, was withdrawn after the individual left office; (2) *inām* was a hereditary right to levy taxes from the designated *parganah* or village; (3) *sardeshmukhī* was generally a tenth of the taxes of the state which was collected separately from and in addition to the taxes due to the state. The territory of the Maratha 'local lord' class was an accumulation of various titles or rights over various lands. For example, the territory of Māne *deshmukh* who had the *deshmukhī* of *parganah* Mhesvad and Dahigānv on the river Mān, a branch of the river Bhima, itself a branch of the river Krishna, took the form shown in Table VI.

Table VI
Territory of the Mane[24]

Name of parganah	*I*	*II*	*III*	
	Deshmukhi	*Sardeshmukhi*	*Inām*	*Jāgir*
Mhesvad	0	0	0	
Dahigānv	0	0	0	
Kalādhon		0	0	
Ānkalūj		0		0
Kāsegānv		0		0
Brahmapuri		0		0
Sāngole		0		0
Bhalavni		0		0
Nājire		0		0
Ubartapā		0		0
Pāngaritapā		0		0
Bhālki				0
Cicoli				0
Nilge				0
Adpadi	0			
Mangalavede	0			
Elāpur	0			

We can see from Table VI that Māne *deshmukh* accumulated rights of *deshmukhī* and *sardeshmukhī* along with the *inām* in Mhesvad and Dahigānv. Thus Māne had almost complete landlord rights over these two districts. However the right over these two districts was not expressed as a landownership right, but, still as the accumulation of two *vatans* and *inām*. This was due to the peculiarity of society in the medieval Deccan where land-holding itself was not the decisive factor. The Māne *deshmukh* had one or two of the three rights over the other districts. In these districts, the right of the Māne coexisted with the rights of other people. Accordingly, in many of these districts, the *deshmukh*,

sardeshmukh and *ināmdār* (or *jāgīrdār*) collected their emoluments separately from peasants. This state of affairs was heavily troublesome for the peasants.

Since Maratha 'local lords' came mostly from *deshmukh* families, their territory was not wide in extent and military men in their service rarely exceeded a thousand. Let us take Jedhe *deshmukh* as an example to examine the structure of the military force of Maratha 'local lords'. The ancestors of the Jedhe deshmukh family were *patels* of the village Nere, *parganah* Junnar in the northern Deccan, but, for some reason or other, they came to Utoroli, a hilly district near Pune in the early part of the sixteenth century. Here, they began to serve under the *deshmukh* of this district. When there was no heir to the *deshmukh* family, the Jedhe went to Bidar, the capital of Barid Shāhī and obtained the *deshmukhī vatan* of this district. But Khopade, the son-in-law of the former *deshmukh*, ambushed Jedhe and killed him. An orphan of Jedhe was fostered by a *deshmukh* of the neighbouring district. Since the grown up heir of Jedhe contended repeatedly with Khopade, a *got sabhā* was held and the *deshmukhī vatan* of this district was divided into two parts. Bhor was given to Jedhe, and Utoroli to Khopade. In this process, a group of retainers called *bārā mulve* (12 original retainers) supported the Jedhe. Jedhe had promised that he would give *bārā mulve* one half of the emoluments of *deshmukhī*, after winning it. But it would have caused the peasants great hardship had he and *bārā mulve* each levied their emoluments separately from peasants. So this arrangement was given up after obtaining the *deshmukhī* of Bhor, and instead, the village Kāri, one of four *inām* villages of Jedhe, was given to *bārā mulve*, and they decided to reside in this village. In 1618, the village Kāri consisted, in all, of 40 *takā*. These *takā* were allocated among *bārā mulve* as shown in Table VII.

Table VII
Bārā mulve of Jedhe[25]

Name of bārā mulve	*Number of takā*
Gholap	2
Petkar	1.5
Kodālkar	3
Māhālā	2.25
Godāvlā	1.5
Jedhe Velangkar	3
Āsāmdār	2
Bādbākar	1.5
Khocharyā	1.5
Sanas	1.5
Tupe	1.5
Vanjojī Dekānā	1.5
Indrojī Jedhe	2.25
Chudānā	1.5
Sonji Kārkari	2
	28.5

The remaining 11.5 *takā* was allocated among the *deshpānde, sutār, lohār, canbhār, kunbhār, parīt, sonār, gurav, joshī, mahār* and some others. This arrangement was almost the same even in 1652-53.[26] The military force which Jedhe commanded through these retainers amounted to nearly seven hundred men.[27]

In the 1690s when Jedhe joined the army of Rājārām, the grandson of Shivaji, his military force was incorporated into the military system of the Maratha kingdom. In 1707-8, the head family of Jedhe had the title of *senā panchsahashtri* (commander of 5000 soldiers) and was given an annual payment of 2500 *hon*. Each of the two branches of the families of the Jedhe had the title of *senā sahashtri* (commander of 1000 soldiers) and was given an annual payment of 700 *hon*.[28] According to a document written in 1716-17, the Maratha government made annual payments even to some *bārā mulve*.[29]

Thus, military forces of the Maratha Kingdom were based on the military forces of Maratha 'local lords'.

2. *Relations between 'Local Lords' and Peasants*: As stated before, many *deshmukhs* had grown into influential 'local lords' by the end of the sixteenth century. But, it does not mean that they had lost their functions as the head of the "*parganah* community". As long as they ruled the land and man in the name of *deshmukh*, they had to discharge the duties of *deshmukh* to the last. In 1629, the *deshmukh* of *parganah* Nevasa submitted a petition to the ruling state. It ran as follows:

> The army of the Mughals came to our village and damaged *kuran* (meadow land) and gave the remaining grass to their cattle. They cut down unripe crops and took them away. Thus the villagers are in helpless condition. What is more, the Bhonsle, *jāgīrdār* of this district, took away the villagers' cattle and seized even the smallest amount of money. As a result, the villagers have despaired and deserted the village. The village is desolate. For this reason, I beg to revise the amount of the tax levied on this village.[30]

In 1692, the *deshmukh* and *deshpānde* of *parganah* Indāpur petitioned for a reduction of the tax of this district because there was no rain and crops had failed in its previous year.[31] Even in 1769, the *deshmukh* and *deshpānde* of *parganah* Nanemaval presented a petition to the state for a reduction in the tax because of devastation from war and drought.[32]

Abhaya patra shows clearly the functions of *deshmukh* as the head of the "*parganah* community". In the year 1691 when the Jedhe joined the Maratha army, the following *abhaya patra* was issued.

> In the 18th year from the coronation of *Chatrapati* Shivaji, this *abhaya patra* was given by Rājārām to the *deshmukh* Sarjārāv Jedhe, *deshpānde*, *patel*, *kulkarṇī*, *caugulā*, the other *vatandārs*, *shet* and *mahājan* of *parganah* Rohidā. You proceeded to Jinji, seat of King Rājārām, and stated. "*Vatandārs* and the peasants of this district pledge allegiance to your Majesty. So, please issue order to the effect that the *vatan* of all *vatandārs* of this district continue as it did under Nizām Shāhī and Ādil Shāhī, and give us the *abhaya patra*". Therefore, pleased by your pledging allegiance to the king, the district

concerned was entrusted to Rāmacandra Amātya and Shankarājī Pant Saciv. They will make decisions on *vatan* after taking your statements into consideration, and will issue *vatan patras*. Their *patras* have the same effects as those of the king. According to their *vatan patras*, the king will continue your *vatans*.[33]

In this document, we can see that the *deshmukh* as the head of the "*parganah* community" submitted the petition to the state to continue all *vatans* in the district when the "*parganah* community" decided to come under the control of the state. In another *abhaya patra* of 1628, *vatans* of the *deshmukh*, *deshpānde*, *patel*, *kulkarṇī*, *bārā balute* and *mahār* were mentioned as being continued by the state.[34] It means that what was ensured by *abhaya patra* was the *vatan*-system itself. *Abhaya patra* was an assurance to bring no change into the social relations of local society.

Another occasion when the functions of *deshmukh* as the head of the "*parganah* community" came into view was, as stated above, the *got sabhā*. When any trouble occurred in the district, the *deshmukh* called a *got sabhā* and presided over it. In the case of a prolonged dispute pertaining to the *patelkī vatan* of the village Pasari, *parganah* Vāi, at least four *got sabhā* were convened. They went as follows.

(i) The Cause of the Dispute: The *patelkī vatan* of this village was a hereditary *vatan* of Kondji. But, since this village was attacked by the famine and desolated, Kondji could not pay the contracted sum of the taxes to the state, so, he ran away from the village. (The taxes were levied on the village as a whole, and the *patel* was responsible for the payment of the whole amount of the taxes.) The *havāldār* (Collector) of the *parganah* called him back, and gave him a notice that his *patelkī vatan* be confiscated and conferred on another person, if he could not pay the taxes. Since he still could not pay it, he was imprisoned. The *havāldār* summoned Rikāme and Yevare and said that two-thirds of the *patelkī vatan* would be conferred on them, if they paid the taxes. They answered that they would pay it, if a *got mahzar* to this effect was issued.

(ii) *Got mahzar* I: So, the *havāldār* ordered the *deshmukh* of the said *parganah* to convene a *got sabhā* and issue a *got mahzar* to ensure that two-thirds of the *patelkī vatan* of the said village was given to them. Accordingly, a *got mahzar* was issued and the *patelkī vatan* was divided into three parts among Rikame, Yevare and Kondji. (But this procedure was questioned afterwards.)

(iii) *Thal patra* I: After five or six years, the distpute broke out again. Kondji sued the *sadr* (Judge) to fix the *thal* (literally, the place) where the case be decided, and send both parties there. Accordingly, an order to this effect was issued by the *sadr*, so, both parties went to the *deshmukh* of this *parganah* to ask him to name the *thal*. The *deshmukh* named the village Talegānv as the *thal*. They went to the village Talegānv, and a *got sabhā* was held there. In this *got sabhā*, the *got mahzar* I that Rikāme and Yevare possessed, was declared invalid, because no sign of *sāthī prajā va bārā balute* of this village was put on it. Consequently, Kondji's right to the *patelkī vatan* was confirmed and *thal*

patra I to this effect was issued. Kondji showed it to the *deshmukh* and *sadr*, so Rikāme and Yevare were ousted from the village.

(iv) *Thal patra* II: But, since Rikāme and Yevare continued the dispute, the village Chimangānv was named as the *thal* again, and another *got sabhā* was held there. In this *got sabhā* also, the *got mahzar* that Rikāme and Yevare possessed, was decided to be invalid, because it was forced to be written by means of imprisonment of Kondji. And *thal patra* II was issued to the effect that they should abide by the decision of the *got sabhā* of the village Talegānv.

(v) *Got mahzar* II: Taking all these processes into consideration, the *got sabhā* of this *parganah* (AD 1667) decided that Kondji was right. A *got mahzar* to this effect was issued for Kondji. (Participants in this *got sabhā* were the *havāldār*, *majmudār*, 9 other *parganah* officials, 6 *shet*, 43 *patels* of the neighbouring villages with the *deshmukh* as the president = *sabhā nāik*.)[35]

Thus *deshmukhs* continued to fulfill their functions as the head of the "*parganah* community", even after they had turned into ruling 'local lords'. And the relation between the *deshmukh* and peasants was not expressed as a landlord-serf relation, but continued to be expressed as a relation between *vatandārs*, i.e., a relation expressing the division of labour within a community.

V. *A Reconsideration of the Concept of Feudalism*

From the foregoing analysis of social structure in the sixteenth-eighteenth century Deccan, we can conclude the following.

1. The direct producers were the peasants who owned all the means of production including land. In general, they were not part of a joint family (or extended family), but constituted a nuclear family which did not depend on subordinate labour like that of slaves.

2. The main exploiting class of local society was the community leaders, especially *deshmukhs* who had turned into the rural ruling class by the end of the sixteenth century at the latest. But they were not denominated as landlords or feudal lords. The title which gave them the authority to rule the land and man was *deshmukhī vatan*, even after their transformation into the rural ruling class. This state of affairs was due to the fact that in the medieval Deccan where land was abundant in proportion to the population and agriculture was closely interwoven with cattle breeding, landownership could not be the decisive factor in appropriating surplus labour of the direct producer.

3. Thus the class-relations between the rural ruling class and peasants was not expressed as a landlord-serf relation, that is to say, not a relation of landownership as in medieval Europe.

4. The rural ruling class could not monopolize judicial rights over the peasants, because, so long as their title to rule the peasants was based on *deshmukhī vatan*, their behaviour was restricted within the framework of the community to which they belonged.

Can we call such a society feudal? My answer is affirmative. If feudal society is defined as a society in which the basic 'relationship between men and men'

is expressed as a landownership relation, then, medieval Deccanese society cannot be called feudal. But, the decisive point is the character of the 'relationship between men and men' in connection with the appropriation of surplus labour, and not the judicial explanation of that relationship through landownership. Even the same 'relationship between men and men' can take forms other than landownership in a society where land is not the decisive factor due to the conditions of nature and agriculture.

Granted that a feudal society not based on the principle of landownership relation is possible, the concept of feudalism has to be expanded to include various societies where the basic 'relationship between men and men' is a relation between the peasants (who possess all the means of production themselves and whose main labour force is family labour without subordinate labour like that of slaves) and the exploiting class (whose denomination can be various. It is within the context of this expanded concept of feudalism that society in the middle Deccan can be called feudal.

REFERENCES

1. The word Deccan usually denotes the whole of the central plateau of Indian peninsula, but, in this essay it only refers to the north-western portion of the plateau shown in the map. p. 251.
2. *SCS*, III-532, 534, 544. 3. Ibid., III-564. 4. Ibid., III-575.
5. Ibid., VII-54. 6. Ibid., II-115.
7. Ibid., I-81, V-802; *SSRPD*, III-397 etc.
8. *SCS*, III-575. 9. Ibid.
10. It is in striking contrast to the agricultural condition of modern India where scattered land-holdings form one of the greatest impediments to the development of production.
11. *SCS*, IV-694.
12. The joint family seems to be a rather new phenomenon which has been, mainly, brought about by 'modernization' or urbanization processes under colonial rule, because it is found, generally, in densely populated urban areas, not in rural areas.
13. *MIS*, XX-151.
14. The motive of the state in measuring land was to ascertain the maximum tax-bearing capacity of each village. Land was measured, though roughly, and classified into three classes, namely, the first (*āval*), second (*dum*) and third (*sīm*), to each of which a specific amount of tax per *bīghā* was fixed. By multiplying the numbers of *bīghā* of each land class in a village by respective amount of tax per *bīghā*, the state could find the maximum amount of taxes (known as *kamāl jama*) leviable on the village. This maximum amount of taxes was usually reduced according to the condition of the crops, and levied on the village as a whole. That is, the state had no intention of controlling each individual peasant by means of land measurement. The village community, on the other hand, allocated this lump sum of taxes among its members according not to the acreage of land held by each peasant so ascertained by land measurement, but according to the specific number of *rukā* each peasant held.
15. See H. Kotani, *Marukusu to Ajia* (Marx and Asia) [in Japanese], Tokyo, 1979.
16. H. Fukazawa, "Lands and Peasants in the 18th Century Maratha Kingdom", *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*, VI, no.1 (June 1965), pp. 32-61.
17. H. Fukazawa, "Rural Servants in the 18th Century Maharashtrian Village", *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*, XII, no. 2 (February 1972), pp. 14-40.
18. *SCS*, I-12. 19. *MIS*, XX-12. 20. *SPD*, XXII-230.

21. Oturkar, 71. See also H. Kotani, "A Critical Study on Indian Village Communities" (in Japanese), *Rekishigaku Kenkyu* (*Journal of Historical Studies*), September 1970, pp. 1-14.
22. Jedhe, 15.
23. For the *vatan*-system, see H. Kotani, ("Social Structure of Local Society in the 17th Century Deccan"), in N. Karashima ed, *Studies of Village Communities in Indian History* (in Japanese), Tokyo, 1976.
24. *SCS*, V-845.
25. Ibid., II-337.
26. Jedhe, 19.
27. *MIS*, XVI-1.
28. Jedhe, 30.
29. Ibid., 39.
30. *SCS*, IV-691.
31. Ibid., III-648.
32. *SPD*, XXXIX-123.
33. *MIS*, XV-349.
34. *SCS*, XI-64.
35. Ibid., VIII-70.

17

A Ṣūfī Institution of Awadh

SAIYID ZAHEER HUSAIN JAFRI

Documents and the letters belonging to the *ṣūfī* establishment at Salon (district Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh) have been analysed to reconstruct an authentic account of the growth of the landed properties of a seventeenth century mystic family and the multiplicity of land rights acquired by it through the period of time.[1] But various gaps were left as a result of incomplete information on certain vital aspects. Since then, in the course of further explorations in the history of the establishment, I have come across a variety of evidence whose examination along with the records already studied not only strengthen the points made earlier, but also reveal some interesting aspects of the role of this *ṣūfī* establishment.

The element of intrusion of local customs in matters of inheritance and succession, and even in respect of *waqf* properties is fully borne out by these documents. Some information also relates to the differences in the attitudes of the various social groups to the accommodations and adaptations made by the *ṣūfī* institutions in evolving certain practices.

A calendar of the documents discussed here has been arranged in a chronological sequence at the end as Appendix B and each document is assigned a number for ready reference.

I

The *khanqāh* established at Salon belongs to the *Chishtī-Niẓāmī* tradition coming through Shaikh 'Alāul Haq of Pandua (d. AD 1398) (West Bengal) and his son Shaikh Nūr Quṭb 'Ālam (d. AD 1410) to Shaikh Ḥusām-ul Haq of Mānikpur (d. AD 1470) in Awadh. The seventh *sajjada-nasheen* of *Khānqāh-i Ḥusāmiya*, Shaikh 'Abdul Karīm (d.1647), had selected Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad to lead this *silsilah* in Awadh and nominated him as his successor. It is with this event that the change of guard took place from Manikpur to Salon. This way the newly established *Khanqāh-i Karīmiya* by Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad (named after his preceptor) became the nerve centre of *Chishti-Niẓāmī* tradition in Awadh. According to the popular tradition in the family, Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad was given some practical advices by his spritual preceptor, i.e., to 'avoid the path of confrontation' and try 'to become welcome to all persons'. This *dohā* in Awadhī language survives as the 'motto' of the institution for generations to come:[3]

پیرن رسنا تھام کے کر مسکینی بھیس
میٹھے بولو نئے چلو سبھی تمھارو دیس

[O! Pīran, hold your tongue, become a recluse, utter the sweet words, follow the straight path, the whole world will be yours.]

The family of Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad claims to be Farooqi Shaikh and says that while its original home was Medina, it had settled in Yemen; thereafter migrated to India and came to Nagor. The celebrated Qāzī 'Hamīd ud-dīn Nagori (the teacher of Shaikh Quṭub ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī) belonged to this branch. From Nagor, the family came to Jaunpur during the period of Sharqī Sulṭāns. Makhdum Shaikh Bahā'uddin and Shaikh Minallāh Addhan acquired much fame; the latter became famous as a *ṣūfī* saint, and from him the family started using the title Addhani. One of his descendants Shaikh 'Abdul Nabi settled at Salon. We are in dark about the 'exploits of the family' here till the time of Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad, who was born in 956 AH/AD 1578.[4]

After early education at Salon, he went to Mānikpūr (known at that time as *Dār al-'Ilm*) for higher studies in rational and traditional sciences at *Kāla Madarsa'*. But after an 'incidental encounter' with Shaikh 'Abdul Karīm, he got himself enrolled as his pupil. After being taught *Tafsīr-i Baiẓāwi* (a Quranic commentary from *m'atazalite* point of view) and *Hedāya'* (the digest of jurisprudence of the *Ḥanafī* school), he remained for quite some time under his spiritual guidance and instructions.[5] Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad came back to Salon and as per instructions of his *pīr*, undertook a *chilla'* (meditation for forty days in a prescribed manner) at the tomb of Saiyid 'Abdul Shakoor and Saiyid 'Abdul Ghafoor (said to be the companions of Saiyid Sālār Mas'ud Ghazī, many of whose tombs are found in the region), popularly known as *Pirān-i Paratha*. After completion of this training, Shaikh 'Abdul Karīm came from Mānikpūr to declare him his successor and asked him to take up his abode along with a *sannyāsī* (hermit). The family manuscripts record many anecdotes of his 'spiritual prowess *vis-a-vis* these *sanyāsīs*, and 'quite expectedly' he defeated them spiritually and finally settled there where the *khanqāh*, mosque and the tomb (*maqbarā*) of the family stand presently.[6] The 'spiritual jurisdiction' of Mānikpūr shrine over Salon was there for all time to come. Thus Shaikh 'Abdul Karīm has reportedly told his successor that:

آیو جایو پیرنا ہر انگن ہوئے جایو(جار؟)
ڈھلین مار جگایو ہم اٹھ لاگب سار

[O! Pīran keep on coming to my place (whenever in trouble), wake me up (even if in a deep sleep) I will be on your side.]

Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad became a celebrity 'in the world of spirituality' during the life time of his Shaikh, and the latter was highly enamoured of his

successor's popularity and made frequent visits to Salon to witness the esteem in which he was held by all. His sentiments are aptly expressed in one of his *dohās*:[7]

چاچر دیکھن ہم گئین پیرن کے دربار
دیکھت نینا جوھ گئیو بسر گئیو گھر بار

[Having gone to see the popularity of Pīran at his *darbār* (see the place); the eyes could not stand the glitter, I forgot even my own place.]

Although he himself became a celebrity his regard for his *pīr* lasted throughout. Therefore we find Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad expressing the following sentiments whenever his *pīr* visited Salon:

ابن آصف مست شد از دیدن پیر کریم

[The son of Āṣif (title of his father) got intoxicated with a glimpse of Pīr Karīm.]

Highly appreciative attitude of the *pīr* towards the *murīd*, when the latter had carved a niche for himself in social hierarchy, had been the hall-mark of Chishti tradition in India since the very beginning.

Soon, the Shaikh acquired considerable prominence as a mystic and theologian. Emperor Aurangzeb came to know about the man he was; therefore, he entertained the hope of meeting him and invited him to Delhi 'to pay a visit to the shrines of his *pīr* so that the emperor could also meet him [Document no. 1], but the invitation was politely refused [Document no. 2].

At the same time we find that the local officials had made over to him 'by way of an offering for the servants of one knowing the mystic truths' (*nazr-i khādimān-i ḥaqāiq-wa m'aārif-i āgāh)*, a grant of 200 *bīghā* land in village Mirzāpur Bakhtiyār, *pargana* Naṣīrabād, *sarkār* Mānikpūr, *ṣūba* Allahabad. As the initial grant was made by the local officials, so it was temporary in nature (co-terminus with the tenure of the official concerned). Therefore an imperial *farmān* was issued on 5th *Shawwāl*, 19th RY/AD 1676 recognizing the rights of the grantee [Document no. 3]. The Mughal chancellory invariably designated such grants as *madad-i m'aāsh*, but probably this is the unique *farmān* where instead of standard formula, a high sounding description has been given, in tune with the esteem in which the grantee was held by the local and the imperial officials. The mystic died at an advanced age of 109 years in 1099 AH/AD 1687. It was through him that a branch of the *Chishti-Niẓāmi* order was established in Patna by Shāh Mu'izuddin of Kurja. His *murīd* Shāh Mujeebullah (d. AD 1777) established a *khanqāh* at Phulwāri, near Patna, which still survives as an important centre of mystic activity in the present Bihar.

In the life time of Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad his son Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf, was assigned the revenues of a village Singhwal, renamed Ashrafābad, *pargana* Naṣīrabād, by the *zamīndārs* of the village. A perusal of the *ḥāṣil* figures of the village from 4th RY to 17th RY incidentally given in the *ẓimn* suggest that the revenue paying capacity of the village was greatly reduced, hence the *zamīndārs* transferred their rights to the mystic, who sought tax exemption from the authorities in the form of *madad-i ma'ash*. This was made in absolute perpetuity on 18 *Jamād* I 22nd RY/AD 1679 [Document no. 4]. He must have been a minor when he was named a beneficiary in the grant in lieu of his father, who already held a grant. His young age might explain why no spīritual titles are put before his name and the standard formula of *madad-i m'aāsh* is employed to describe the grant, in contrast with the respectful address and an unusual description of grant for his father. Shaikh Ashraf seems to have become quite a legend, and some sort of cult had developed around his personality. This has caught the imagination of an author like Mirzā Qatīl,[8] and the *ṣūfi* poet of Awadhi language Shāh Qāsim Daryabādī.[9]

The rising graph of his popularity brought additional laurels for him. By the close of Aurangzeb's reign, he came to possess a vast area as *madad-i m'aāsh*, spread over eight *pargana* in *ṣūba* Allahabad and four *pargana* of *ṣūba* Akhtar-nagar Awadh, either through imperial favours or through the local officials and the *zamīndārs*. All these were now conferred by Bahadur Shāh through the *farmān* dated 17th *Zilhij* 2nd RY/AD 1707 [Document no. 5]. The interesting aspect highlighted here is that in the *ẓimn*, a citation is made to the effect that "the grantee with a large number of mendicants is engaged in propagating the tenets of *shari'at* and *ṭarīqat* in the area" and that in "some of these villages he has established mosque, *musāfirkhānā*, and in the barren land has caused habitations to come up and has named them after his sons". These brought additional justification for his claim for an imperial *farmān* in respect of his urban property as well as the villages and *chaks* [Document no. 5]. Probably the same considerations led him to get another *farmān* from Emperor Muḥammad Shāh on 19th *Rabi* I 10th RY/AD 1729 [Document no. 6]. He died in AD 1754. The tomb with a very big egg-shaped dome was constructed in 1171 AH/AD 1757 over his grave by an overseas merchant-disciple named Saiyid 'Abdullah, whose 'ship was saved from disaster due to the spiritual intercession of his Shaikh', so says the legend. The chronogram of the tomb has been reproduced in William Beale's *Miftāh-ut-Tawārīkh*.[10]

The *nawāb-wazīrs* during the first half of the eighteenth century had resumed a number of *madad-i m'aāsh* grants in Awadh and Allahabad provinces, though not from any sectarian motive, as has been suggested by Ghulām 'Alī Azād Bilgirāmi (*c.* AD 1761). A number of villages belonging to *khanqāh-i Karīmia*, Salon were also resumed and were included in the *jāgīr* of other nobles. It appears that it was a general order applicable in both the *ṣūbas* indiscriminately (*bar ḍabti-i a' imma-i ṣūbājāt*). Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf petitioned to Nawāb

Burhānul Mulk Sa'ādat 'Alī Khān seeking exemption to his grant from such order, as 'if this is not done, the maintenance of the *khanqāh* and the mendicants will become difficult'. The *nawāb* acceded to his request and promised a separate *parwānā* to the officials for treating petitioners' grant differently.[11]

His eldest son Shāh Pīr 'Aṭā acquired a fame unparalleled in the history of the institution. It was through him that the branches of this *khānqāh* were established at the far-off places, like Hyderabad Deccan, by Shāh Shuja'ul Haq Badakhshāni. *Owāisiya* and *Qalandariyā* Orders of mysticism were popularized by him at Salon.[12] As he predeceased his father, his younger brother, Shāh Muḥammad Panāh was nominated to succeed as the future *sajjādā nasheen*. It is said that he was held in high esteem by the Emperor Shāh 'Ālam II. When he held *darbār* at Allahabad in AD 1764 the mystic sent request for a new *farmān* in lieu of the earlier ones. It was also solicited that the new *farmān* may be issued in the name of his son (the designated successor) Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā. The *farmān* was issued on 15th *Safar* 6th RY/1178 AH/AD 1764 [Document no. 7]. The significance of this act, i.e., seeking the imperial *farmān* in the name of the successor is hard to grasp, as we know that all the *madad-i m'aāsh* grants were made hereditary by Aurangzeb in 35th RY/AD 1690. Was it that the *nawāb wazīrs* were reluctant to follow such an order indiscriminately, hence care was taken to safeguard the property in the manner it was done by Shāh Muḥammad Panāh?

The establishment seems to have been the largest of its kind in the southern part of Awadh. Its annual income was estimated by Donald Butler (AD 1836) at Rs 30,000, which was utilized in entertaining the *bairāgīs* and *faqīrs* without any distinction of religion. The visitors used to flock to the *khanqāh* in large numbers and at a time there might happen to be about 100 mendicants. These were attended to and looked after by the *sajjādā nasheen* of the *khanqāh*, whose reputation was such that whenever any new *chakladār* was appointed in the *niẓāmat* of Salon, he always paid a visit to him and offered him a few hundred rupees as *nazr*.[13]

W.H. Sleeman, while undertaking the tour in the kingdom of Oudh (AD 1849-50), refers to this establishment as the prime mystic institution of the kingdom. Shāh Panāh 'Aṭā, the then *sajjādā nasheen* of the *khanqāh*, was looked upon with great reverence by both Muslims and Hindus for the sanctity of his ancestors and the institution. He did not go out of the *khanqāh* 'but remained there to receive the homage and distribute food to the needy and the travellers of all religions.' Sleeman estimated the annual income from the grant held by him in AD 1850 at about Rs 25,000.[14]

In addition to the income from the revenue-free grants assigned by the Oudh rulers, the local officials as well as the princes in the distant places such as Bhopal, Sironj and Rewa made subtantial offerings. This way, the actual income of the establishment was calculated to about Rs 50,000 a year. Complimentary letters were sent to Shāh Panāh 'Aṭā by the Governor-General of India, and the

Lieutenant Governors of NW provinces. When Colonel Sleeman was passing through the district of Salon, Shāh Panāh 'Aṭā sent him "letters of compliments and welcome with a present of a tame antelope, some fruits and sugar".This goodwill gesture was reciprocated by Sleeman, who got the impression that "his character is held in high esteem by all classes of the people, of whatever creed, caste or grade".[15] However, in spite of this show of cordiality between the British authorities and the institution, it is worth recalling that immediately after the annexation of the kingdom of Awadh in AD 1856, Shāh Panāh 'Aṭā was in deep anguish, and thoroughly condemned their act. Thus, he expressed his feelings:[16]

ظلم واجد بہ ز عدل کمپنی

[The 'oppression' by Wājid (Alī Shāh) was better than the justice of the Company.]

Between the annexation of Awadh (February 1856) and the events of 1857, there was a move to confiscate the properties of the *sajjādā nasheen*, but due to the strong social acceptability and the respect in which the institutiton was held by the Hindus and the Muslims both, the move to punish the institution for its alleged anti-British feelings was dropped. It is said that initially Major Barrow, the Chief Commissioner of Awadh after annexation, conducted an enquiry into the credentials of the grantee, but all the files and papers were destroyed during the events of 1857. The second enquiry could begin only during the first regular settlement of the province (AD 1860). The details of the enquiry conducted by W.C.Wood, the then Deputy Commissioner of Partapgarh, now forms a historical narrative giving the history of the landed properties accruing to the family since the period of Aurangzeb, the details of the buildings belonging to the institution and maintained out of the *waqf* fund, the income and heads on which the expenditure was incurred. A distinction was made between the personal expenses of the *sajjādā nasheen* and the charitable expenses of the institution, including the *madarsa'*.[17] On the basis of this report Lord Canning issued the *sanad* on 26 September 1862, recognizing the allodial rights of Shāh Ḥusain 'Aṭā, the then *sajjādā nasheen*, over 22 villages of his grant [Document no. 8]. It is pertinent to point out that now the grant was a conditional one; it was to continue so long as the income was devoted to the maintenance of the *khanqāh*, buildings, tomb, mosques and running of a school of 'Muḥammadan Education' and the continuance of the charities.

Till the promulgation of UP Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act of 1952, the family continued to have possession of these 22 villages, though with some vicissitudes, especially litigations. After the abolition of the *zamīndārī*, the annuity was given by the UP Government only for the *m'aāfī* villages and the amount fixed was a pitiable sum of Rs 14,800 per annum. The net result of such a policy has been quite disastrous for the upkeep of the institution. The

present *sajjādā nasheen* of the *khānqāh* Shāh Aḥmad Ḥusain Jafrī Iṣlaḥi (himself a scholar) also feels, 'it is unthinkable to manage such an institution with the amount the government has fixed, but since the things have to be kept moving, it has to be managed on our own'.[18]

II

The manner in which the *zamīndārs*, the local chieftains, and the provincial officials bestowed favours upon these mystics can be culled from the *wājib al-arẓ* documents prepared during the course of the first regular settlement of the province of Awadh after the events of AD 1857. These papers recorded the 'past history of the village from the earlier period to which it can be conveniently traced'. On the basis of such village-wise information, the history of the families and clans of the various regions was arranged and incorporated in the settlement reports.

A few *wājib al-arẓ* of the villages included in the *m'aāfī* of the grantees are available. A perusal of these records gives us some idea of the procedure adopted in bestowing these favours.

a. Village Dhankesara, *pargana* Parshadepur, and village Barwaliya, *pargana* Salon, were in the estate of Raja Balbhadra Singh, the Kanhpuria chief of Tiloin. He had donated the revenues of these villages in favour of Shāh Pīr 'Aṭā, so that he may be able to meet the expenses incurred in feeding the mendicants, the destitutes and the visitors to his *khanqāh*. Since then till 1174 F/AD 1763 the grantees held the possession of the village on the strength of the *sanad* of the Raja, thereafter in 1175 F/AD 1764, the imperial *farmān* of Shāh 'Ālam II included these villages also in the grant of the grantees [Document no. 7].

b. The Raja of *ta'alluqa* Bhadri, *pargana* Behār, had allotted two tracts of forest land to Shāh Muḥammad Panāh. The grantee got forest cleared and settled the area with the peasant castes especially *kurmīs*. One tract was named Panāh Nagar and another Hayāt Nagar (after his deceased brother, Shāh Muḥammad Hayāt).

c. A number of forest tracts were granted to Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā by Emperor Shāh 'Ālam II. The grantee undertook the clearance of the forest, settled the peasant caste of *kurmīs* and named it after his father as Panāh Nagar.[19]

The existence of a large number of villages and *chaks* having the nomenclature similar to that of the family members of the mystic establishment in *pargana* Salon and *pargana* Kunda, suggest that many tracts of forest land were cleared by these grantees to settle the population and in turn raise their income. In fact, renaming of the well-known towns during the medieval period was an established practice, and the same was done by the grantees at the local level, must have been in tune with the imperial policy. But a citation in a *farmān*, that "the grantee has caused habitation to come up in the barren land, and named them

after his sons" is suggestive of the fact that it was not only the renaming of the old, but also establishing altogether new villages.

III

The traditions inherited and the practices adopted at the *khanqāh* Salon continued to survive in spite of the 'efforts of Saiyid Aḥmad Shaheed of Rae Bareli to purge Islam of the innovations (*bid'at*) and to wage a holy war against the Christians and the Sikhs'. In fact his 'religious zeal' prevented him from distinguishing between innovation in religion and an adaptation of the various practices in tune with the local customs by the *ṣūfi* establishments. This inability to differentiate the two and the failure to appreciate the spirit behind the ceremonies associated with the *Khānqāh* at Salon appear to have caused misunderstanding between him and Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā, as the former's biographers indicate. He is said to have visited Salon at the time of *'urs* and found that during the audition (*sama'*) the *murīds* (disciples) indulged in *raqṣ* (mystic dance) in the state of *wajd* (ecstacy) having earthen pots filled with water on their heads. Quite expectedly Saiyid Aḥmad objected to the ceremony on account of its being un-Islamic. If one is to believe his biographer again, Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā admitted his fault and abandoned the practice altogether'.[20]

Leaving aside such claims, the practice actually referred to is that of *gāgar* (lit. a small earthen pot; taking out a procession from the *khānqāh* along with the disciples and musicians by the *sajjādā-nasheen* and going to the shrine of *Pīran-i Parātha*, to fetch water in the pots after reciting *fātiḥā* there). The practice is said to have originated in the *Chishti -Niẓāmī* Order in Awadh during the time of Shaikh Ḥusāmul Haq of Mānikpūr. The practice continues at Salon irrespective of the assertion of the biographer. Similarly the association of *raqṣ* with *gāgar* is also a figment of his imagination. It appears that this time the gulf between the *ṣūfis* and the 'zealot' *'ulema* was again widening, although a reconciliation was attempted between the two by Shāh Waliullah (d.1761) and Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz (d.1827). Now, it was for the biographer of Saiyid Aḥmad and persons like him to describe such practices as *bid'at*. Not only this, but even the well-known *ṣūfi* concept of *taṣṣawur-i shaikh* was said to have been compared with idolatry by Saiyid Aḥmad when his own spiritual preceptor Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz reportedly told him of that.[21]

On the other hand we find the practice of *gāgar* has caught the imagination of other contemporaries, who found in it, 'another chance of getting closer to *nūr* (lit.; Light; Reality, Truth) and a way of attaining *m'arifat* (gnosis)'. One of them, Shāh Kāẓim, the founder of a *khānqāh* of *Qalandariya* Order at Kākori (UP) had paid a number of visits to Salon 'for the blessings and guidance of Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā'. The practice of *gāgar* at Salon was too well known to him and he refers to it in a respectful manner:[22]

اے ہو کریم عطا کر پا رکھ ہم پر ہم تجھے بڑی آس لگائی
نور سے بھر دو گاگر ہری چھونچھی گاگر گھر جات لجائی
کاظم پائی کریم عطا میں رب کریم کی جوت سمائی

[O! Karīm 'Aṭā, have mercy on me, I have pinned my hopes in you; Fill my *gāgar* with *nūr*, as I feel embarrassed at taking the empty one to my house; O! Kāẓim I see the light of God in Karīm 'Aṭā.]

Another poet of the later period has also expressed similar sentiments :[23]

غیرت ساغر جمشید حسامی گاگر
مئے عرفاں سے ہے لبریز یہ نامی گاگر

[The bowl of Jamshed is envious of Ḥusāmul Haq's *gāgar*, as the latter is filled with the wine of gnosis (*irfān*).]

It would be quite unhistoric to think that the perception of the *'ulemā* about the role of the *ṣūfī* institutions and the customs they have adopted from region to region was in anyway monolithic in nature. On the contrary, we notice substantial differences among them. This thing comes out clearly from the description given by another contemporary, Shāh 'Abdur Rehman, known as *mawḥid* (monotheist) of Lucknow, whose description of *tawḥīd* is considered to be a very stringent indictment of *shirk* (polytheism).[24] In course of his sojourns in various parts of the country, he visited Salon and stayed with Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā for three months. He found in Salon, the tradition of '*darveshī* and *sulṭānī* going side by side, and found nowhere except in Salon the guest being looked after so well'. He had reasons to be impressed by Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā because of the way in which he 'looked after the welfare of the destitutes and mendicants at his *khānqāh*'. He entertained similar hopes for future also due to the 'sophistication, erudition and scholarship of Maulavī Shāh Panāh 'Aṭā', the son and successor of Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā.[25] It appears that unlike Saiyid 'Aḥmad, Shāh 'Abdur Reḥmān was looking for the things of *ṭā'at-i mut'addi* (man's obligations towards man), a cordial principle in *Chishti* tradition. This is what Donald Butler also emphasizes when he says that Saiyid Aḥmad could not gain much in Salon, as he was told by the *zamīndārs* and the *miyān* (local title for *sajjādā nasheen*) that for them relieving and aiding the poor, the lame and the blind was more pious than indulging in the holy war. They also told him clearly that they intend to follow the example of the forefather.[26]

IV

The perceptions about the institution of the *sajjādā nasheen* (apart from the things in the 'world of spirituality' where he was bound to be supreme for the

devotees and the disciples of the Order), and the rules relating to the succession to the office deserve some consideration. It was made out to be an exact replica (*fara'*) of *rāshidūn* caliphate and according to the Sunnī belief, the *shari'at* laws of inheritance were not applicable to the institution of caliphate. The methods in matters of succession were only two, i.e., the nomination in favour of the future successor during the life time of the Caliph, and the consensus (*ijma'*) among the prominent people (*ahl-i ḥal wa 'aqd*), the latter option was available in the absence of the former only. But after the nomination, *ijma'* was simply out of question. Exactly the same was applicable in matters of office of the *sajjādā nasheen*.[27] As will be seen, in the *khānqāh* of Salon, everything revolved around and was subjected to the person of *sajjādā nasheen* only. Hence the laws of succession and inheritance were kept in tune with the requirements of this spiritual office. This, ultimately, resulted in the intrusion of many local customs in the family laws of "*faqīr sajjādā nasheen* whose property can be inherited only by the *sajjādā nasheen*", as if they were a class in themselves.[28]

The customs and conventions peculiar to the family of the *sajjādā nasheen* got the legal sanctity when they were included in the *Rawāj-i 'Āam* of the *pargana* Parshadepūr, *teḥṣīl* Salon. In the preamble it is explicitly mentioned that as a result of the agreement between the superior land right holders and the government that the "legal settlement of the villages belonging to us has been done for a period of thirty years, and the particulars peculiar to us and our clan (*qaum*) are described in details ... we agree to abide by these rules". On behalf of Shāh Ḥusain 'Aṭā, it was signed by Saiyid Kāẓim 'Ali, his *kārindā*. In fact, an analysis and comparison of the various clauses relating to the different *zamīndār* clans of the area on the subjects of enquiry with the ones relating to the *faqīr sajjādā nasheen* will be an interesting study of the intrusions of the local customs, and the adjustments with the *shari'at* laws. However, the main features of the customary law relating to the *khānqāh* Salon in relation to the succession and inheritance were as under:[29]

a. The lawful heir and the legal representative of the *sajjādā nasheen* will only be the *sajjādā nasheen*. The latter was to be nominated by the previous incumbent to the office in his life time by observing certain customary ceremonies and rituals in a prescribed manner as detailed in the *Rawāj- i'Āam* itself.

b. The other heirs and the legal representatives of the *sajjādā nasheen*, including his widow, were not entitled to any share in the properties left by the deceased. They could claim only a subsistence allowance known as *guzāra'*(subsistence allowance). The responsibility of looking after the widow and the unmarried daughters of the deceased, was of the future incumbent to the office of the *sajjādā nasheen*.

c. The *sajjādā nasheen* himself was a custodian of the properties attached with the institution, and thus he was not empowered to effect any change either by way of sale, mortgage or by oral gift.

We have noticed earlier that it was the office of the *sajjādā nasheen* around which the whole institution revolved, but finally we see him as a person,

irrespective of 'his standing in the hierarchy of the world of spirituality', in the institution of *khānqāh* to safeguard the properties and to carry out the customary law.[30]

APPENDIX A

List of the Sajjādā Nasheens of Khānqāh-e Karīmiya at Salon

1. Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad (died 1687)
   nominated by Shaikh 'Abdul Karīm, the *sajjādā nasheen* of the *khānqāh* established by Shaikh Ḥusāmul Haq at Mānikpūr.
2. Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad Ashraf (died 1754)
   nominated by 1.
3. Shāh Pīr Muḥammad Panāh (died 1785)
   nominated by 2.
4. Shāh Muḥammad Karīm 'Aṭā (died 1833)
   nominated by 3.
5. Shāh Muḥamamd Panāh 'Aṭā (died 1860)
   nominated by 4.
6. Shāh Muḥammad Ḥusain 'Aṭā (died 1880)
   nominated by 5.
7. Shāh Muḥammad Mehdi 'Aṭā (died 1900)
   nominated by 6.
8. Shāh Muḥammad Na'īm 'Aṭā (died 1966)
   nominated by 7.
9. Shāh Muḥammad Ḥusain J'afrī (died 1979)
   nominated by 8.
10. Shāh Aḥmad Ḥusain J'afrī, nominated by 9
    (the present *sajjādā nasheen* of the *khānqāh*.)

APPENDIX B

Document no. 1

Letter ascribed to Emperor Aurangzeb (undated).

Addressed to (Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad) with high regards. After salutations—whereas this time I am preoccupied with the suppression of the turbulence at Deccan; hence it is not possible for me to pay a visit to you. If your goodself is coming to Delhi to visit the shrines of your *pīrs*, I would welcome meeting you (*mulāqāt-i ān malkī ṣifāt kardah āyad*).

Document no. 2

Letter ascribed to Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad in reply to Aurangzeb (undated)

O! Emperor, the protector of the religion. This mendicant finds no courage (to attend the royal summons) as what a rustic has to do at the imperial court? (*īn dahqāni rā bā bazm-i sulṭāni cha' kār*). If perchance some one happens to visit the *khānqāh* he is welcome; and *Karīm* made me dependent upon none, He provides me when I feel hungry, if I am asleep, He cares, if (perchance) some sin is committed by me He helps me out. His favours are sufficient for me and to strive for more will be useless (ambition) (*Karīm-i mā bas bāqī hawas*).

Document no. 3

Farmān of Aurangzeb 5th *Shawwāl* 19th RY/AD 1676

Whereas it has been submitted to the exalted court, that according to the deeds (*asnād*) issued by the officials (*ḥukkām*) 200 *bīghā* of land from the village Mirzāpūr Bhakhtiyār, *pargana* Naṣīrabād, *sarkār* Mānikpūr, *ṣūba* Allahabad has been made over by way of offering to the servants of the one knowing mystic truths (*nazr-i khādimān-i ḥaqqāiq-o m'aārif agāh*), Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad, and he is in actual possession of the land above mentioned and entertains the hope that in this regard an imperial *farmān* may be issued; therefore the order is given over to him in *madad-i m'aāsh* in accordance with the particulars on the *ẓimn*, so that he may, appropriating revenues thereof for his own needs and engage himself in praying for the long life of the ever prosperous empire. Either imperial officers or those of the *jāgīrdārs* should not allow any alteration, leaving the land in the hands of the grantee, they should not harass the grantee on account of land revenue or other taxes and cesses (details omitted), or by insisting upon cultivation, and all fiscal impositions and government dues whatsoever. Confirmatory orders should not be demanded every year by the grantees and if at some other place the grantee has anything (land grants), it should not be taken into account (to reduce the present grant). Written on the 5th *Shawwāl*, 19th Regnal Year.

Document no. 4

Farmān of Aurangzeb 18th *Jamād* I 22nd RY/AD 1679.

Whereas, at this time the exalted *farmān* has been issued that the village Singhwal in entirety, *pargana* Salon, *sarkār* Mānikpūr, *ṣūba* Allahabad, having a *jama'* of 32,000 *dām* should be assigned to Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf as *madad-i- m'aāsh* according to the *ẓimn*, from the half of *Rabi'ul* I, so that the assignee should spend all revenues for his own use, and should busy himself in praying for the welfare of the everlasting Empire, therefore, it is incumbent upon the present and future officials to leave the said village in the possession of the grantee and should recognize it exempt from all the taxes and demands. Renewal orders should not be demanded by the grantee every year and if at some other place he has anything it should not be paid attention to, dated 18th *Jamād ul-Awwal* 22nd RY.

Ẓimn

Court proceeding dated 21 *Rabi* I 22nd RY by the *ṣadr* Rizvi Khān during the posting of Daulatmand Khān *waqāi'nawīs*; according to the letter of Mīr Muḥammad Raẓā Garvī, the *waqāi'nigār* of the province of Allahabad, it has been conveyed to the exalted court that Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf has settled with the consent of the *zamīndārs* in the village Singhwal under the aforesaid *pargana* and has named it Ashrafabad. Saiyid 'Abdul Rahīm *ṣadr-i juzv* of Allahabad has also sent this recommendation. [They] Entertain the hope that world subduing order will be issued that the aforesaid village has been conferred in its entirety as his *madad-i m'aāsh* for generations to come.

Ḥāṣil figures of the said village:

1. 4th RY	Rs 50
2. 5th RY	Rs 31
3. 6th to 9th RY	Rs 91
4. 10th RY	Rs 21
5. 11th RY	Rs 26
6. 12th to 16th RY	Rs 66
7. 17th RY	Rs 61

Document no. 5

Farmān of Shāh 'Ālam Bahādur Shāh Bādshāh *Ghāzī*, 17th *Rajab* 2nd RY/1119 AH/AD 1707.

This *farmān* is issued to the effect that villages, *chaks* and cultivable as well as the residential land, in the *pargana* of *sarkārāt* Mānikpūr and Lucknow, *ṣūba* Allahabad and Awadh are conferred on the basis of the *sanads* of the *ḥukkām* and *zamīndār*, in favour of the mystics Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad Ashraf of Salon, as revenue free (*m'aāf*) from the beginning of *kharīf tankūr*, the grantee should continue to hold his *madad-i m'aash* and appropriate the revenue (*ḥāṣilāt*) to himself and continue to keep him busy in praying for the longevity of the everlasting empire. Be it known to the *'āmils*, *jāgīrdārs* and the present and future *karorī* to carry out this order in respect of the villages and *chukūk* as given in the *ẓimn* in favour of the grantee and after him, his progeny (*naslan b'ad naslan baṭnan b'ad baṭnan*). The grantees should not be harassed on account of taxes and cesses (details omitted) prohibited by the sublime court. Neither the grantees be asked to pay dues on account of *diwānī* or *sulṭānī*. Written on 17th *Zilhij* 2nd RY.

Ẓimn

Court proceeding dated 13th *Rajab* 2nd RY/AH 1119 prepared in the *risāla'* of Amjad Khān, during the posting of Mir Muḥammad as *waqā- i'nigār*. It was submitted to the sublime court by the *wazīr* (titles omitted) Khān-i Khānā Ẓafargunj that the mystic Pīr Muḥammad Ashraf son of *sajjādā nasheen* Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad Saloni is deserving of the (imperial favours) as he, with a large

group of mendicants is engaged in propagating the tenets of *shari'at* and mysticism. Also along with the *'ulemā* and mendicants he prays for the increase in the prosperity of the everlasting empire. He possesses, besides the *farmāns*, the *sanads* issued by various *ḥukkām* and *zamīndārs* for the continued possession, without any sharer of the cultivable and residential land *(ārāẓi-i sakni wa zara'i)* villages and hamlets, *chaks*, *sarkār* Mānikpūr, *ṣūba* Allahabad, and *sarkār* Lucknow, *ṣūba* Akhtarnagar Awadh. In some of the villages he established mosques, *musāfirkhāna'*, and in the barren land had caused habitations to come up, naming them after his sons. He now requests for the Imperial *farmān*. It was, therefore, ordered that all the villages, hamlets, *chaks*, residential and cultivable land in the *pargana* of *sarkār* (above named) should continue to be as the *madad-i m'aāsh* of the grantee. If at some other place he has anything, it should not be paid attention to. Sheet of memorandum prepared according to the court proceedings.

The *waẓīr* presented the matter for approval of the emperor a second time (*b'arẓ-i mukarrar*). After seeking the imperial consent, the *farmān* was ordered to be written in accordance with *siyāha'* of 21th *Rajab*, 1st RY.

List of the hamlets, *chaks*, gardens, dwellings and *ḥavelīs* in possession of the grantee, and the Imperial land grants of which the grantees are in actual possession without any co-sharer according to the *ẓimn*.

A. *pargana* of *sarkār* Mānikpūr, *ṣūba* Allahabad

1. *pargana* Salon

khāṣ qasba' Salon *ḥavelī*, tomb (*maqbarah*), houses and gardens	— 2 *bīghā* 10 *biswa'*
Village 'Atānagar with *sā'ir*	— 69 *bīghās*
takiya' Bahādur	— 10 *bīghā*
Gulābī *bāgh*	one plot
Musāfirkhāna'	one *bīghā*

Villages of *pargana* [Salon]

aṣlī	*dākhlī*	*chak*
nine	one	one

(i) Village Pīrnagar Moḥīuddīnpūr with *sā'ir bāzār* Usarī, (ii) village 'Aṭāgunj, (iii) village Khwājapūr, (iv) village Singhwal Ashrafābād known as Ashrafnagar with *sā'irbāzār*, (v) village Barwaliya', (vi) village Rāmīpūr, (vii) village Mādhopūr Ninaiyan, (viii) village Kenwalpūr, (ix) village Sindhiyāpūr.

chak: (i) *chak* Ramīpūr

land in village Auna	— 7 *bīghā*

chaks in *pargana* Salon:

(i) Ashrufgunj Ratāson	— 55 *bīghā*
(ii) Panāhnagar Dharai	— 66 *bīghā*
(iii) Karīmnagar Rewli	— 45 *bīghā*

2. *pargana* Guzarāh, three villages

(i) Muḥammadābād, (ii) Pālhīpūr, (iii) Naīnī. Also *sarāi La'l Beg, ghāt* Naīnī and 'Azīzpūr

3. *pargana* Jāi's

(i) village Kesariya Salampur, (ii) village Mohan

4. *pargana* Naṣīrabād

(i) village Dhankesara, (ii) village Mirzāpūr known as Pīrangunj.

5. *pargana* Rae Bareli—5 villages and *chaks*.

(i) village Harchandpūr, (ii) village Rūpāmau, (iii) village Malikpūrsarya, (iv) village Jiupūr, (v) village Narūka.

chaks: (i) *chak* Gokna', (ii) *chak* Sāhi

6. *pargana* Dalmau—one village (i) Amrudpūr.

7. *pargana* Kara': village Afẓalpūr Sāton with cultivable land, 7 villages.

(i) Afẓalpūr Sāton, (ii) Mālikpūr, (iii) *pūra* Muḥammad Sa'eed, (iv) Mirzāpūr, (v) *kach* Sāton, (vi) *kach* Kantuwa', (vii) Konda Māran.

8. *pargana* Mānikpūr Bihār, one village, 13 *chak*.

village (i) Kishandāspūr

chaks: (i) Karīmnagar, (ii) Pīrnagar, (iii) Panāhnagar, (iv) Panāhgunj, (v) Majhilgāon, (vi) Jhanka', (vii) 'Aṭānagar, (viii) Momī, (ix) Barai, (x) Bargadahā, (xi) Nihāhu, (xii) Narṣāhib, (xiii) *chak* 'Āyesha'.

B. *pargana* in *sarkār* Lucknow, *ṣūba* Akhatrnagar Awadh

3 villages, 21 hamlets and 140 *bīghā*, 8 *biswa' 'arāẓī*.

1. *pargana* Bijnore, (i) village Ashrafnagar Dharwa' 2. *pargana* Amethī, (i) village Pīrjalālpūr, (ii) village Maurāmav Karīmnagar.

Document no. 6

Farmān of Emperor Muḥammad Shāh 19th *Rabi* II 10th RY/AD 1729

The plots of residential and agricultural land, *chaks*, and villages in *sarkār* Mānikpūr, *ṣūba* Allahabad and villages in *sarkār* Lucknow, *ṣūba* Akhtarnagar Awadh have been conferred upon Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf according to *farmāns*, deeds of the officials and *zamīndārs*. This time, also, as per previous practice, the grant is confirmed in *madad-i-m'aāsh*. It is ordered that the grantee be allowed to appropriate the revenue thereof and engage himself in praying for the well-being of the empire. It is incumbent upon the present and future *'ammāl, jāgīrdār* and the *karorīs* to abide by the Imperial orders by allowing the grantees (to appropriate the revenue) from the villages, *dehāts* and *chaks* as detailed in the *ẓimn* generations after generations and for all times to come. The grantee should not be harassed on account of taxes and forbidden cesses (details omitted). *Sanads* of confirmation should not be demanded from the grantee every year and if at some other place the grantee has anything it should not be taken into account. Dated 19th *Rabi* II 10th RY.

Document no. 7

Farmān of Shāh 'Ālam II 15th *Safar* 6th RY/AD 1764

Various villages, *chaks*, gardens, and residential apartments in *ṣūba* Allahabad and Akhtarnagar Awadh have been conferred upon Pīr Muḥammad Panāh of Salon according to the *farmāns*, and deeds of officials and *zamīndārs*. From the beginning of *kharif yichī Il*, all of the above are confirmed as *madad-i m'aāsh* to Shāh Pīr Karīm 'Aṭā, so that he may appropriate the revenues thereof for his own needs and engage himself in praying for the longevity of the empire.

It is incumbent upon the officials, revenue collectors, *mutaṣṣadīs*, *jāgīrdārs* and present and future *karorīs* to abide by the orders of the sublime court. They should see to it that all these properties are held by the grantees generation after generation and for all times to come. The grantee should not be harassed on account of *māl o jihāt, sāir wa ikhrājāt* (details omitted). Dated 15th *Safar* 6th RY/AD 1764.

Ẓimn

Details of the *yāddāsht-i wāqi'a*, list of the *dehāts*, *chaks*, gardens and residential *ḥavelīs ṣūba* Allahabad, *sarkār* Mānikpūr.

Villages	44
chaks	21
'ārāẓi	114 *bīghā*, 8 *biswa'*

(i) *pargana* Salon: Havelī with *Pā'inbāgh*, Karīmganj with old fort, Pīrnagar Mohīuddīnpūr, Muḥammadābād, Pālhīpūr, 'Aṭāgunj Usarī, Khwājāpūr, 'Aṭānagar, Takiyā Bahādur, Gulābībāgh, Ashrafnagar Singhwal, Barwaliya' Rāmīpūr, Musāfirkhāna' (7 *bīghās*) Madhopūr Ninaiyān

(ii) *pargana* Jā'is:Kesarya Saleempūr, Mahoba.

(iii) *pargana* Naṣīrabād: Dhankesra, Pīrangunj, Mirzāpūr.

(iv) *pargana* Dalmau: Amrudpūr.

(v) *pargana* Kara' : Afẓalpūr Sāton (*zamīndārī* of the grantee), Mirzāpūr, Pūra Muḥammad Sa'eed.

(vi) *pargana* Mānikpūr: Bihār.

(vii) *pargana* Rai Bareli :

chaks—Ashrafgunj, Panāhnagar Dharaī, Karīmnagar Rewlī, *chak* Atārthariyà, 'Aṭānagar Bāron (in *pargana* Dhingwas)

ṣūba Akhtarnagar Awadh, *sarkār* Lucknow 4 *pargana* (?)

(i) *pargana* Bijnor—village Ashrafnagar, (ii) Amethī, village Bheta, (iii) Rasolī, Karīmnagar Sirāson.

Document no. 8

Sanad of Chief Commissioner of Oudh dated 26.9.1862

It having been established after due inquiry that Shāh Ḥusain 'Aṭā held the undermentioned land in *tehṣīl* Salon, *zilā* Partapgarh in rent-free tenure under

the former government, the Chief Commissioner, under the authority of Governor-General in Council, is pleased to maintain the tenure so long as the grantees perform their duties and keep up the buildings and the school according to the terms of the grant on the following conditions:

that he shall have surrendered all *sanads*, title deeds and the documents relating to the tenure in question;

that he and his successors shall strictly perform all the duties of landholder in matters of police and any military or political service that may be required of them by the authorities; and

that they shall never fall under the just suspicion of favouring, in anyway, the designs of enemies of the British Government. If any one of these conditions is broken by the present incumbent or any of his successors, the tenure will be immediately resumed.

(1) Village Mirzāpūr Bakhtiyar, (2) *Bazār* Karīmganj, (3) Ashrafgunj Singhwal, (4) Pilhpūr, (5)Khwajāpūr, (6) Kewalpūr, (7) 'Aṭāganj Usarī, (8) Mādhopūr Ninaiyān, (9) land *chak* Rāmīpūr 150 acres, (10) land in 'Aṭānagar 7 acres, (11) Pīrnagar Mohīuddīnpūr 35 acres, (12) Village Barwaliyà, (13) Pīrnagar Mohīuddīnpūr, (14) 'Aṭānagar $27\frac{1}{2}$ acres, (15) Ashrafgunj, (16) Panāhnagar Dhingwas, (17) *chak* Atārthariyà, 24 acres (18) Village Takiyà Pura Baheliya appertaining to Madhopur Ninaiyan 117 acres, (19) Village Dhankesarà 167 acres, (20) Muḥammadābād, (21) Sindhyāpūr, (22) *chak* Karīmnagar.

Sd/-

Deposited in the Record Room of the office of

Chief Commissioner, Oudh

26th September 1862 AD

DETAILS OF THE DOCUMENTS DESCRIBED IN APPENDIX B

1. The text of the letter is reproduced in a late family text, *Ashraf-ul Inshā*; a collection of the letters exchanged between Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad and Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad Ashraf with his contemporary divines, princes and other notables, MS(1734), ff.2a-3a (in the private collection of Shāh Muḥammad Jalīl 'Aṭā, a *pīrzādah*, of Salon, now at Karachi, who kindly allowed me to have the photocopy of the manuscript).
2. Ibid.
3. An earlier copy of the *farmān* was in possession of Shāh Muḥammad Ḥusain J'afrī, 9th *sajjādā nasheen* of *khānqāh* Salon (1966-79). The contents of this document have been described and translated by me in 'Two *madad-i m'aāsh farmāns* of Aurangzeb from Awadh,' *PIHC*, 40th session, Waltair, 1979, pp.302-14. The document was destroyed during the course of unfortunate incidents at Aligarh Muslim University in May 1981. It was transcribed by Professor Irfan Habib also before its destruction.

4. Ibid.
5. The *farmān* is with Shāh Muḥammad Amīn 'Aṭā, a *pīrzādah* of Salon, now in Khushāb, Punjab, Pakistan. He has very kindly allowed me to have the photocopy of the *farmān*.
6. Photographic reproduction (obverse side) of this *farmān* appears in Shāh Muḥammad Ḥasan 'Aṭā, *Harīr-e Sang*, Nafees Academy, Karachi, 1963, p.119.
7. The transcript of this *farmān* is with the present *sajjādā-nasheen* of the *khānqāh* Shāh Aḥmad Ḥusain J'afrī Iṣlāḥī.
8. This is a bilingual document and has been quoted in full by Justice Sir Wazīr Hasan and Justice Gokaran Nath Misra in their judgement of a civil appeal in reference to Shāh Muḥammad Na'īm 'Aṭā (Defendant-appellant) vs. Muḥammad Shamshuddīn (Plaintiff respondent). *Indian Law Reports* (Lucknow Series), vol. II, 1927, Allahabad, pp.109-32 (see pp. 111-12 for the *sanad*).

REFERENCES

1. See my 'Landed Properties of a '*Sūfi* Establishment— A Study of 17th and 18th Century Documents from Salon in Awadh', *PIHC*, 47th session, Srinagar, 1986, pp. 417-31; also see 'Two *madadi m'aāsh farmāns* of Aurangzeb from Awadh', *PIHC*, 40th session, Waltair, 1979, pp. 302-13.
2. Little information exists in the contemporary sources about *Khānqāh-i Ḥusāmiya* Mānikpūr. For biographical notices of Shaikh Ḥusāmul Haq see Shaikh 'Abdul Haq, *Akhbārul Akhyār fi Asrārul Abrār*, Delhi, 1309, AH, pp. 171-3; K.A. Nizāmi, *Tārīkh-i Mashāikh-i Chisht*, Delhi, 1953, pp. 203-4; John A. Subhan, *Sufism: Its Saints and Shrines*, Lucknow, 1960, p. 230. For a history of the *khānqāh* and the family tree of Shaikh Ḥusāmul Haq see 'Ābdullāh Khān Qais, *Tārīkh-i Kara' Mānikpūr*, Allahabad, 1916, pp. 260-66.
3. These *dohās*, popular as *astuts*, survive with the musicians and the singers attached to the *khānqāh*. But some of them have been transcribed in the family papers and the manuscripts which are being used here.
4. Biographical notices of these ancestors of Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad exist in *Akhbārul Akhyār*, pp. 44 and 226-7. For him there are independent references in Muḥammad Bakhtāwar Khān, *Mīratul 'Ālam*, Persian text, ed., Dr. Sajida Alavi, Lahore, 1979, II, p.417; Saiyid Shāh Ghulam 'Āli Shāh, *Mishkātun Nubuwah*, *mishkāt*-27, MS compiled in 1212 AH. (I am grateful to Professor Sulaiman Siddiqi, Osmania University, Hyderabad for letting me use this manuscript). The author tells about the other name of Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad as Shāh 'Abdul 'Ali, which could not be compared from the other sources; Mufti Ghulām Sarvar, *Khazīnatal Āṣfiyā'*, Lucknow, 1280; Saiyid 'Abdul Hai', *Nuzhatal Khawāṭir*, V, Hyderabad, 1911, pp. 97-8.

   In other *tazkiras* his maternal grandson Saiyid S'adullah who got much prominence as a theologian, *ṣūfī* and a scholar of comparative religions, is referred to as the grandson of Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad, who in turn is called the great mystic and theologian of his times. See Khafi Khān, *Muntakhabal-Lubāb*, *Bib. Ind.*, Calcutta, 1860-74, II, pp. 559-60; Ghulām 'Alī Āzād Bilgirāmī, *Māthiral Kirām*, Hyderabad, 1913, vol.I, p. 217; Mir 'Alī Sher Thattavi, *Maqālāt-us- Shu'rā*, ed, Pīr Husāmuddin Rāshidī, Karachi, 1957, pp.122-3. For the history of the family, the institution, and the family tree see 'Abdullāh Qais, *Tārīkh-i Kara' Mānikpūr*, pp.261-69; A *Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh*, 3 vols., Lucknow, 1877, p. 290; H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteer of United Provinces (Rae Bareli)*, Allahabad, 1923, vol. 39, pp.100-103.

5. For the details of this incidental meeting see *wājibul 'arẓ* of village Panāhnagar Barai', *pargana* Bihār, and of village Barwalia, *pargana* Salon, in the *First Settlement Report of 1860*; *Nuzhatal Khāwātir*, V, p. 97; *Tārīkh-i Karà Mānikpūr*, p. 261. It is interesting that during the seventeenth century also a person before being initiated into mysticism, was supposed to do extensive courses in *Qurān*, *Fiqh* and *m'atazalite* thought.
6. Affidavit of Shāh Muḥammad Mehdi 'Aṭā, the VII *sajjādā nasheen* of the *khānqāh*, dated 26th September AD 1881. This has been published in full by Shāh Hādi 'Aṭā in *Muṣannif*, an Urdu Quarterly Journal, edited by Saiyid 'Ibārat Barelivi, Aligarh, 1945, III; no. 3, pp. 78-80.
7. Ibid.
8. Qatil mentions Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf as an important saint of *Chishti* order with an anecdote. He says, his desciples buy parrots and make the birds recite the Shaikh's name (obviously without his consent) and then leave the birds in the adjoining *jungals* of Salon. When the travellers and pilgrims listen to them, they are impressed with 'spiritual prowess' and the 'saintly qualities' of the Shaikh. Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥusain Qatīl, *Haft-i Tamāshā*, Urdu trans. Dr. Muḥammad 'Umar, Burhān, Delhi, 1968, pp. 168-69.
9. Shāh Qāsim Daryābādi (ob. AD 1731) *Hans Jawāhir Bhākha*, Bombay, 1951, p. 4. There are three long *alhās* praising the 'saintly qualities' of Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf, his father, and his father's preceptor, Shaikh 'Abdul Karīm. The family tradition says that the poet was a disciple of Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf.
10. Besides giving the chronogram of the tomb, the chronograms inscribed at the main gate of the tomb (giving the death dates of the first four *sajjādā nasheen*) have also been reproduced in a chronological sequence. Similarly, the chronogram of the mosque of the *khānqāh* is also given. Thomos William Beale, *Miftāḥut Tawārīkh*, Agra, 1849, *passim*. It was the general belief that the tomb was a replica (*naql*) of the tomb of Shaikh Baha'uddīn Zakariya of Multan.
11. Apart from the recipient of such favours, the family sources point out cordial relationship between the *nawābs* and the *sajjādā nasheens* of the *khānqāh*. It is said that Burhān'ul Mulk and Ṣafdarjung visited Salon when Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf was the *sajjādā nasheen*. See Shāh Panāh 'Aṭā, *Fakhrul Fuqara'* (MS.) 1268 AH, f, 95. A number of *parwānas* were issued by the *nawābs* granting exemption to these grantees from the resumption. See for the translations of these *parwānas* my paper, *PIHC*, 47th session, Srinagar, 1986, pp. 428-29.
12. Little biographical details are available for him. But it is certain that he emerged as the most fascinating personality of the institution. For, he undertook a number of meditations for a considerable time span. He got two *ḥavelīs* constructed in village Ashrafgunj, *pargana* Mānikpūr, and village Sālon, *pargana* Kara', *ṣūba* Allahabad and one *chillagāh* (house for meditation) in the environs of *qasba'* Salon, called as *musāfirkhāna'* also. The extensive ruins of these buildings and the surviving cult around the person of Shāh Pīr 'Aṭā stands as a testimony to his social standing and his stature in the 'world of spirituality'. These *ḥavelīs* had their foundation in the river Ganges, with a mosque and *chillagāh* in each of them; they are absolutely free from the sort of vandalism we usually notice in such ruins. The locals have that much respect for the *chillagāh* which is otherwise a hallmark of a shrine. Nawāb Ṣafdarjung is said to have visited him at Ashrafnagar where 'the saint reportedly performed a miracle at the behest of the *nawāb*'. See, *Fakhrul Fuqara'*, f. 96. Shāh Qāsim Daryābādi was full of praise for him and thus expressed:

جیہہ پر عطا عطا کی ہوئی پاپ ہرا نرل بھا سوئی
پیر دولارو کریم کے' اشرف پیر کے نند نرل دوؤ جگت وہ تاکلک جس چند

"The one who has the blessings of (Pīr) 'Aṭā, his sins are washed and he becomes pure. For, he is a favourite of Karīm (Mānikpūrī) and son of Ashraf Pīr, these two could purify a world of their sins and blemishes."

13. Donald Butter, *Topography and Statistics of Southern Districts of Oudh*, Calcutta, 1839, pp. 139-40.
14. W.H. Sleeman, *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oudh in 1849-50*, 2 vols, London, 1858, I, pp. 232-4. An abridgement of this celebrated travelogue has been done by P.D. Reeves, *Sleeman in Oudh*, Cambridge, 1971, pp. 128-29, 131-32.
15. Ibid.
16. On a different occasion he criticised Wājid 'Alī Shāh also, as he remained a mute witness when Maulavī Amīr 'Alī of Amethī led a *jihād* against the alleged high-handedness of the *bairāgīs* in Hanumangarhi mosque. He castigated the *nawāb* as being directly responsible for the event by composing a highly suggestive chronogram for the tragedy:

بعد بارہ سو برس کے پھر ہوا پیدا یزید

"After twelve hundred years, Yazīd is born again, yielding 1272 AH."
He described Maulavī Amīr 'Alī as *shaheed* (martyr) also. These comments of Shāh Panāh 'Aṭā are spread over in his diary (MS with the present *sajjādā nasheen* of the *khānqāh*).
In fact, it would be quite unhistoric to define the behaviour and 'loyalty' of a *ṣūfī* saint in any stereotype. Their 'responses and reactions' often came very close to the popular sentiments. In case of Shāh Panāh 'Aṭā we notice his many 'identities' overlapping each other in a small span of time, often defying logic.
17. Letter no. 504 of 13 July 1861 from Deputy Commissioner of Partapgarh to the Commissioner of Baiswara division resubmitting *m'aāfī* register nos. 1 to 22 of Shāh Ḥusain 'Aṭā with his docket no. 1936 of 20 November 1860.
18. Personal conversation.
19. This information is gleaned from the *wājibul arẓ* of each of these villages. The documents are the part of the *First Settlement Reports* of the *pargana* Salon and Parshadepūr, now available at the Collectorate's Records Room, Rae Bareli.
20. The only authority for such story is Saiyid Muḥammad 'Alī's, *Makhzan-i Aḥmadī*, f. 56 (compiled in AD 1865). This story is repeated uncritically by Ghulām Rasūl Mehr in his *Saiyid Aḥmad Shaheed*, Lahore, 1954, pp. 155-56. However, Saiyid Abul Haśan 'Alī Nadwī, *Sīrat-i Saiyid Aḥmad Shaheed*, 2 vols, Nadwatul 'Ulemā', Lucknow, 1939, has simply omitted the incident without any comment.
21. This is again from *Makhzan-i Aḥmadī*. However, Saiyid Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī has mentioned this thing in a diluted form with some sophistication.
22. Shāh Kāẓim Qalandar, *Sānt Ras or Nughmatul Asrār*, Awadhi text edited with introduction, notes and translation in Urdu by Shāh Mujtabā Ḥaidar, Lucknow, 1376 AH, pp. 72-73; *dohā* nos. 484-89 [the numbering of the *dohās* is continuous]. The editor tells us in the notes things which are different from what Shāh Kāẓim himself says, besides a factual error, i.e., Shāh Kāẓim has alluded to the 'blessing of the four *pīrs* of Salon for overcoming his difficulties'. Hence they ought to be Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad, Pīr Ashraf, Pīr 'Aṭā and Pīr Panāh, instead of what we are told by the editor.
23. A lesser known poet of Salon, Ishtiyāq Aḥmad Mushtāq, has composed a poem for the *gāgar* procession. This is included in his collection, *Bāgh-i Na'īm*, MS compiled in 1350 AH.
24. For the main arguments see his *Kāsiratul Asnān* and *Kalimatul Haq*. See also *Anwārul Reḥmān Letanwīrul Jinān*, his *malfūẓāt* compiled by Maulavī Nūrullāh, Kali Prasad Press, Lucknow, 1270 AH, p. 33
25. Ibid., p. 33.
26. Butler, op. cit., p. 165.
27. These perceptions are spelled out at a rather unusual place. A registered gift deed executed by Shāh Muḥammad N'aīm 'Aṭā, the 8th *sajjādā nasheen* (1900-66) of the *khānqāh* in 1938 in favour of his successor Shāh Muḥammad Ḥusain Jafrī, the 9th *sajjādā nasheen* of

the *khānqāh* (1966-79). Gift deed executed on 23.12.1938 in the office of the Sub-Registrar, *tehṣīl* Salon, Rae Bareli.

Since the nomination was made by Shāh Na'īm 'Aṭā in favour of Shāh Muḥammad Ḥusain (connected to Shāh Na'īm 'Aṭā's family through female line going up to Shāh Karīm 'Aṭā) ignoring the others of the male line, thus in order to pre-empt the others from making any claim to the office of the *sajjādā nasheen* (which in fact they did after 1966) Shāh Na'īm 'Aṭā had made the position very clear. The custom of nomination was so firmly established that it could not be denied by others as such. After Shāh Na'īm 'Aṭā's death, the title dispute was one of the most hotly contested cases in the chequered history of the family's litigations. Finally, the court also accepted the action of Shāh Na'īm 'Aṭā in 1984 and the title was finally decided in favour of Shāh Aḥmad Ḥusain Jafri Iṣlaḥī, the present *sajjādā nasheen*. [Writ Petition no.1682 of 1982 decided on 12 July 1984 by the Hon'ble High Court of Allahabad, Lucknow Bench, Lucknow. The ruling was reported in *Allahabad Weekly Cases*, X, Allahabad, 1984, pp. 928-32.

In the modern times, Shāh Na'īm 'Aṭā's personality happens to be most multifaceted, a scholar, prolific writer on *Ḥadīth*, *Fiqh*, *Taṣawwuf* and grammar. A poet well known for his devotional poetry, anti-British feelings, and his actual participation in the Kisan Sabha Movement, he was a mystic with a high taste for *samā'* and music. Although a *Ḥanafī*, he was in many respects very imaginative and even innovative by adopting well known principles from other schools of law, many of which were an anathema for the *Ḥanafis*. An authoritative biography of such a person will be a venture worth undertaking. For his early life see, Saiyid Taqī Ḥusain, *Nāla'i Anfās-i Gham*, Lucknow, 1318 AH; for a list of his published and unpublished books (17 titles in Arabic and 6 titles in Urdu) and other biographical details, see 'Abdullah Qais, *Tārikh-i Kara' Mānikpūr*, pp. 267-69; for his role in the peasant movement, though the analysis lacks sophistication, see M.H. Siddiqui, *The Agrarian Unrest in North India, The United Provinces (1918-1922)*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 155-6.

28. *Rawāj-i 'Āam* documents at the *pargana* level were compiled by the British authorities after the events of 1857. The leading land owning classes were to record the customs and the traditions peculiar to their own caste in relation to six broad themes, which were sub-divided into twenty-two sections of specific nature. This 'customary law' had the sanction of the authorities as well. This was done for *pargana* Parshadepūr also, where the *sajjādā nasheen* had considerable landed property. This document has a separate column for recording the customary law of "*faqīr sajjādā nasheen* whose property is inherited by the *sajjādā nasheen*".
29. Ibid. See also *Iqrār Ma'āfidār Mālik Awwal*, village Barwalia, *pargana* Salon, included in the First Settlement of 1860.
30. Donald Butler, op. cit., p.139, especially when he says about the *sajjādā nasheens*, that they call themselves "a *faklr* though the *mālik* (proprietor) of Salon".

18

Urban Population in Pre-Colonial India

SHIREEN MOOSVI

The question of urban levels attained in pre-colonial India lay behind much of the controversy over de-urbanization in the nineteenth century.[1] Gadgil has suggested that there was a slight relative decline in the urban population, though there might have been an absolute increase in its size.[2] L. and P. Visaria have expressed some doubt regrding this,[3] but so far no strong reasons have been advanced (least of all through any production of statistical data) to show that the decline of a large number of towns was matched by a corresponding increase in the population of other towns. Indeed, if anything, the figures collected by Durgaprasad Bhattacharya suggest not only a relative but an absolute decline in urban population during the nineteenth century in eastern India.[4] Even supposing that the absolute size of urban population remained stable over the nineteenth century at 28.5 millions (its actual size in 1901) and further assuming that the population in 1801 was about 200 millions,[5] the relative size of urban population in 1801 should have been as high as 14.3 per cent.

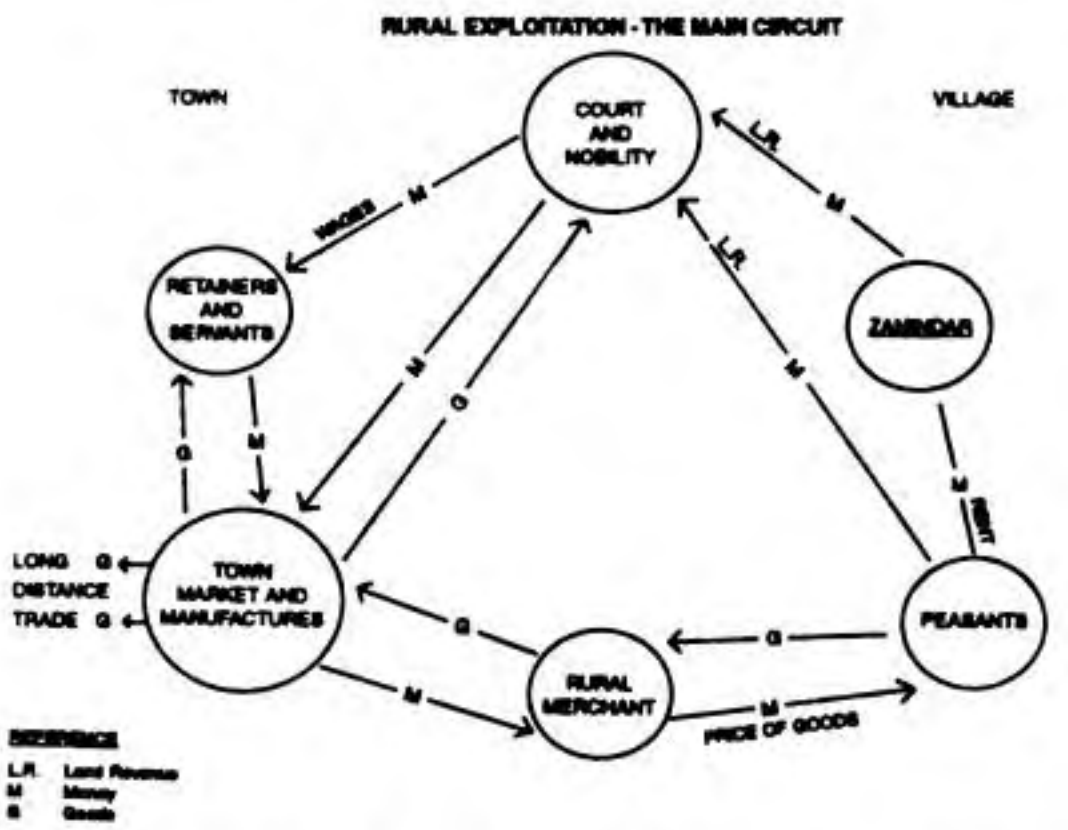
Thus if any de-urbanization occurred in the nineteenth century it must follow that there was a higher proportion of urban population in pre-colonial India than in 1901. Even a percentage as high as 15 per cent cannot therefore be considered implausible given the very simple considerations we have set out above.

The "de-urbanization" debate alone would require that we have a closer look at the nature of pre-colonial urban economy, so as to enable us to have some kind of estimate of its actual size without being constrained by the low figures of urban population revealed by the censuses from 1872 onwards.

In economic terms the emergence of the town signifies the creation of surplus in agriculture. At a certain stage of economic development, as at the dawn of the modern period in Europe, the one-way transfer of products from village to town began to be supplemented by a reverse flow, as urban products found an expanding rural market. So far as we can judge from our evidence, pre-modern Indian urban economy was likely to be in this earlier parasitic phase. Here the urbanization was largely the result of the drain of the surplus from the countryside to the towns without any recompense to the rural economy.

As is widely recognized, the Mughal ruling class was almost entirely town-centred. The Mughal nobles, though usually paid through territorial revenue assignments (*jāgīrs*), seldom directly lived 'off the land'. The *jāgīrs* being service assignments were neither hereditary nor permanent, and for political considerations, a system of transfer of posts and *jāgīrs* was deliberately main-

tained. The relationship between the *jāgīrdār* and the villages in his *jāgīr* revolved usually around his claim to the bulk of the peasant surplus in the form of land-revenue. His household establishment, as well as most of his retinue, was generally quartered in the towns. The net revenue realized was thus almost taken away in full from the countryside. A large urban sector could therefore emerge which was almost entirely dependent upon the countryside. The villages were self-sufficient in regard to the bulk of their own requirements, in spite of the fact that grain had to be sold by the peasants to pay the revenue in cash. The main circuit of the rural exploitation can be represented by the following diagram.



Irfan Habib was the first to lay emphasis on this one-sided relationship based on the townward flow of agricultural surplus as the main factor behind Mughal urbaniaztion. He went on to suggest that the size of urban population could be estimated if we could determine the relative size of the 'subsistence' component in the rural produce transferred to the towns in realization of the surplus.[6]

The Mughal administration laid claim to almost one-half of the total agricultural produce,[7] but the net income received after making allowances for other subordinate shares and cost of collection was much less.[8] Irfan Habib assumes that the actual drain from the countryside was of the magnitude of one-fourth of the value of the total produce. But since in the drained surplus the proportion of non-food component must have been quite high, he assumes that the urban population in Mughal India was about 15 per cent of the total.[9]

This remains largely at a hypothetical level. However, it may be possible to pursue the device suggested by Irfan Habib in a more specific fashion by using absolute figures of revenue realization, its distribution and the pattern of consumption in so far as it can be reconstructed from our information.

This information comes almost entirely from Abū-l Faẓl's celebrated work, the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, a treasure- house of statistical information completed in 1598, but with much of its information relating to 1595.[10] These statistics range over tax collection and measured area (with detailed geographical break-down), prices and wages, etc. Moreland and Ashok V. Desai have already used this

information for estimating the total population of the Mughal Empire and studying standards of living.[11] We seek here to throw the net still wider while hoping to use the *A'īn*'s information for determinig the size of urban population in 1595.

The total effective *jama'* or revenue-income of the Mughal Empire (excluding the Deccan provinces of Berar and Khandesh), on the basis of the detailed *jama'* (revenue) statistics in the *Ā'īn* comes to 3,96,03,27,10 *dām*.[12] This also included taxes other than land-revenue; these did not, however, exceed 10 per cent of the total.[13]

The statistical information, provided by Abū-l Faẓl, on the Imperial household and military establishment and the data on nobles (*manṣabdārs*), according to their ranks and their pay, enable us to work out the distribution of this revenue-income among the court and the nobility (the ruling class) and its further diffusion.

A detailed study of the pattern of consumption of the Emperor and the nobility, that I have made elsewhere,[14] suggests that over 17 per cent of the total effective *jama'* (i.e., 68,43,00,297 *dām*) went directly in wage-payments mostly at subsistence level; and a little above 37 per cent of their revenue-income (1,48,03,40,718 *dām*) was spent by the Emperor and nobility on craft-commodities.[15] A part of this expenditure would, of course, have gone to maintain producers at subsistence level. The ratio between the cost of raw-material and value added by labour in various craft-goods cannot obviously be easily worked out. However, we may still attempt a guess on the basis of some rough estimations of the share of labour-costs in product-values. Pelsaert, *c.* 1626, referring to the articles made of silver and gold (like bed-steads, fan-handles, dishes, cups, betel-boxes, etc.) tells us that "provided the workmanship is good, half the silver might be paid for manufactures".[16] This implies that even in the high value manufactures and artifacts the cost of labour could amount to a third of the total value. This might serve us for the lower limit of the value added by labour. For the share of labour-cost in ordinary urban manufacture, we may seek help from the data collected for coarse cloth by Buchanan during early nineteenth century. In coarse cloth the cost of yarn amounted to 72.6 per cent of the total value; and the cost of uncleaned cotton accounted for 44.3 per cent of the value of yarn.[17] This implies that in the case of coarse cloth the value of raw material came to 32.16 per cent and that of labour to 67.84 per cent of the total value of the final product. This may serve as the upper limit for the proportion of value of labour in craft-goods. Thus taking silver-ware and coarse-cloth to set the two limits, the share of labour-costs in total craft-values should have ranged between one-third and two-thirds of the total value. We may, therefore, not be far wrong in assuming a parity between the cost of labour and raw-material in values of manufactures in general.

However, a slight qualification needs to be introduced here. Both Pelsaert and Buchanan seem concerned with the value at which the manufactures were

available to the merchant buying at the point where the process of manufacture had been completed and not with its final full market price; thus their prices seem to exclude the profits of the merchant, middlemen, etc., and also the share of the usurer in the labourer's wages. But we may assume that the merchant's profits out of the last market-ward movement of the craft product must have remained largely within the urban sector, and much of it probably filtered down again to urban workmen in the form of wages. Our assumption of parity between the cost of labour and raw-material may thus really not be affected even if part of the merchant's or middlemen's profit has been excluded from the total value of manufactures.

Proceeding from our assumption of the share of wages in the amount laid out by the ruling class on craft products,[18] the total amount disbursed as wages of craft labour should have been 74,01,70,259 *dām*.[19] To this should be added the direct expenditure on the service sector (68,43,00,297 *dām*). The total sum annually spent by the ruling class upon directly maintaining the urban population should, then, have been 1,42,44,70,655 *dām*.

So much for the maintenance of the urban population out of the net revenue (*jama'*) that reached the court and the nobility. We have now to examine whether an additional segment of the urban population was sustained by expenditure out of the remaining part of the surplus that adhered to the hands of other classes. Some 37 per cent of the gross revenue-claim was realized by subordinate co-sharers or spent on revenue collection.[20]

The class of *zamīndārs* or rural potentates must have spent some amount, however small, upon urban manufactures, such as superior quality cloth woven in towns, jewellery and items of weaponry. Even the silver and gold hoarded by them as well as any imported horses bought by them should have resulted in an increase in urban craft production in so far as bullion and other imports induced craft exports.

The retainers of the *jāgīrdār*, who received sub-assignments in the villages, should also have generated some demand for urban products.[21] Moreover, the revenue-collectors, whether Imperial or of *jāgīrdārs*, who were more likely to be stationed at administrative headquarters, must have spent part of their allowances[22] coming out of the amount sanctioned for cost of revenue collections largely within the urban sector.

To determine the amount going to maintain urban population through these conduits we may seek help from the data available about their shares or the amount appropriated by them and also hazard some guesses about their pattern of expenditure. I have offered a detailed discussion elsewhere.[23] The table below sets out the size of the assumed proportion of their income going to sustain the urban craft sector.

CATEGORY	*INCOME*		*EXPENDITURE ON URBAN CRAFTS*	
	Relative size	*Calculated amount in dām*	*Size relatives 2b*	*Calculated amount in dām*
1	*2a*	*2b*	*3a*	*3b*
zamindār	20.59% of surplus	1,32,01,11,864	10%	3,20,11,186
headmen	7% of gross revenue	39,60,32,325	5%	1,98,01,616
revenue collectors	10% of cost of collection	11,21,54,090	75%	8,48,64,067
sub-assignees of *jāgirdārs*	12.85% of *jamā*	48,43,43,910	7.5%	3,63,25,793

All amount contributed to the urban sector by the superior right holders, revenue collectors and *jāgirdārs*' rural retainers comes to 35,78,66,730 *dām*. Under our assumption of labour costs being one half of the total value of urban produce, we infer that 17,89,33,365 *dām* went annually to support urban population at subsistence level through sale of craft goods to these classes.

We assume, despite Tapan Raychaudhuri,[24] that the peasants' purchases of urban goods out of what remained for their subsistence after surplus-realization, were too insignificant to have any influence on the size of urban population.

Combining the total expenditure of the ruling class and that of the subordinate classes on wages of urban labour we arrive at the annual total of 1,60,34,04,021 *dām*, as true for the Mughal Empire in 1595. Of this the ruling class contributed 89 per cent and the other classes a mere 11 per cent.

With our estimates of the amount going to maintain the bulk of the urban population, and the amount left in the countryside for subsistence-level existence, it may now be possible to work out the ratio between urban and rural populations, purely on the basis of the subsistence-level expenditures. For this we make the further reasonable assumption that for the mass of population in the towns the physical components of subsistence-consumption were the same as for the mass of population in the countryside. The inference would then be that the total amount paid out in wages in the service and craft sectors should have maintained an equal number of people in the towns and village-town transport as would have been maintained in the villages by the same amount of money. The difference in urban and rural price-levels would be accounted for at least partly by including wages of transport workers and earnings of middlemen in the urban sector.

The value of the part of the agricultural produce retained in the countryside was made up as follows, according to our estimates.[25]

Amount left with the peasants	4,90,35,57,230 *dām*
Rural expenditure of the *zamindārs*, headmen, etc.	1,56,43,31,376 *dām*
Rural expenditure out of payments to revenue staff	1,01,83,68,806 *dām*
Rural expenditure by *jāgirdārs*, retainers	44,80,18,117 *dām*
Total	7,93,42,75,529 *dām*

The amount for urban wages worked out above being 1,60,34,04,021 *dām*, we get the ratio of 1 : 4.95 to represent the urban/rural population ratio. In other words, the urban population was 16.8 per cent of the total, and the rural 83.2 per cent.

Our 'urban' population, however, includes, as noticed above, people dependent upon transport of rural goods to the town markets, some of whom, such as grain carriers, cartment, traders, etc., could have well lived in the villages. Unfortunately, there is no means by which one can conceivably estimate the rural portion of the transport workers and tradesmen. In view of the large volume of the country-town trade,[26] their number must have been quite considerable. The best, though rather arbitrary course, seems to be to round off the urban population at 15 per cent of the total population, by allowing the rural part of the village-town transport workers a size of 1.8 per cent of the total population.

Our detailed calculations largely based on the *Ā'īn's* information on revenue realization and patterns of its diffusion thus support the estimate offered by Irfan Habib for the relative size of the urban population.

The best way to establish the validity of our estimate of the relative size of the urban population could have been by sample checks with regional estimates. The only one so far offered relates to Mārwār. Nainsi in his *Vigat* provides us with the count of houses for certain towns, arranged by caste or profession.[27] This information has been noticed by S.P. Gupta;[28] but the more relevant study is by Bhadani, who tries also to estimate the total population of Mārwār by use of other information in the *Vigat*.[29]

The number of houses in towns given by Nainsi (1659-65) is reproduced below alongside the number of houses in the same towns in the 1891 census.[30]

Town	*Number of houses*		
	(a) 1659-64	*(b) 1891*	*(b) as % of (a)*
	1659-64	1891	
Sojhat	2,254	3,090	137.09
Jaitaran	1,839	1,189	64.65
Phalodi	657	2,438	371.08
Siwana	188	775	421.23
Sanchor	1,205	448	37.18
Merta	5,860	1,917	32.71
Jalor	3,049	2,341	76.78
Pokran	557	1,633	293.18
Total	15,609	13,831	88.61

If the towns for which house-counts have been given by Nainsi form a fair sample of the towns of Mārwār, there must have been an absolute fall in urban population between *c.* 1660 and 1891 by over 11 per cent.

Had the total population of Mārwār remained the same between *c.* 1660 and 1891, the ratio of the urban population to the total should have been considerably higher in 1660 than in 1891. Bhadani, basing himself on plough-counts in the *Vigat*, offers a surprisingly high estimate for the total population of Mārwār in

1660, placing it above the 1891 level. Yet the size he himself deduces for the urban population still lies within the range of 12.24 to 15 per cent of the total population of Mārwār (as compared with 10.60 per cent in 1891). Since his estimate of the total population is indubitably on the high side (the data available for it being far less reliable than those for the urban population), we can almost certainly set his range for the urban population of Mārwār as the minimum possible rather than the likely actual. In any case, even this minimum corroborates our estimate of the relative size of the urban population in the Mughal Empire as a whole.

From the size of the urban population in general we may pass on to its distribution: The author of the *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, *c.*1593, reports that Akbar's Empire contained 120 big cities and 3,200 townships (*qasba'*), each having around it 100 to 1000 villages.[31] Given the total population of Akbar's Empire as 983 millions,[32] the urban population at 15 per cent works out at 1,47,45,000. Given the *Ṭabaqāt's* number of towns the population of an average town should have been 4,435.

Such an average is not unreasonable, and Irfan Habib has already argued that this should induce confidence in the estimated size of the urban population (though his estimates are not precisely the same as ours).[33] The classification that the *Ṭabaqāt* makes of the towns, setting 120 full-fledged cities besides 3.200 townships, or one city to nearly 27 townships, cannot be supported by any detailed scrutiny. Nonetheless, we can say that some of the towns in the Mughal Empire were very large indeed. Monserrate in 1581 considered Lahore, "second to none either in Asia or in Europe".[34] Coryat in 1615 compared it to Constantinople.[35] In the seventeenth century Bernier found Delhi as big or bigger still than Paris.[36] Ahmadābād was described as comparable to London and its suburbs.[37] European travellers in the seventeenth century also give us numerical estimate of the populations of other major cities of the Empire,[38] but since the basis for these estimates is not known it is not possible to use them with much confidence, though generally speaking they support one's impression of large urban populations in the Mughal Empire.

Besides these estimates of the European travellers, the populations of two Mughal cities have been estimated on the basis of contemporary quantitative evidence. Basing himself on the size of the Imperial establishment and the work-force required to cater to the needs of the court and the nobility, Irfan Habib has estimated the population of Akbar's capital Fateḥpūr-Sīkri in the 1580s at 220,000.[39] This is corroborated by other evidence. In 1585 when the court was still at Fateḥpūr-Sīkri, Fitch said that "Agra and Fatepor are two great cities, either of them much greater than London and very populous."[40] He also thought that Fateḥpūr-Sīkrī was "greater than Agra".[41] London around 1600 is believed to have contained a population between 150,000 and 200,000.[42]

These two sister capital cities of Akbar thus must have contained a population nearly half a million around 1585. This accords with the European travellers' estimate of the population of Agra, when with the abandonment of Fateḥpūr-Sīkri it became the main capital city.[43]

For the population of Delhi, in the 1650's, the same device as used by Irfan Habib has been employed by Fatima A. Imam, who arrives at an estimate of over 600,000.[44] As mentioned above, Bernier thought that the population of Delhi was more or less equal to that of Paris.[45] At that time Paris had a population of 500,000.[46] By this time Delhi had replaced Agra as the major capital of the Empire and some of its growth might have been at the expense of the latter city, though the size of Agra too remained impressive.[47]

It would be interesting to compare the estimates of populations of these Mughal cities with those of the largest cities of Western Europe around 1600:

Paris 200,000 to 300,000

London 200,000

Rome 100,000

Besides Paris and London no other city of Western Europe seems to have reached a population mark of 200,000 during the sixteenth century though a number of them such as Antwerp, Amsterdam, Venice, and Naples crossed the 100,000 mark.[48]

If the size of the largest cities could be an index of urbaniaztion, the Mughal Empire had thus attained a level higher than that of Western Europe in 1600.

The final question is, how was urbanization spread within the Mughal Empire, or, in other words, did some regions tend to be more urbanized than others ? There seem to exist no data directly bearing on this question. There has, however, appeared to me one device that by establishing the size of urban taxes out of total taxation may give us some indication for regions within a fairly large part of the Mughal Empire.

The *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* gives us *jama'* for individual *pargana* (small territorial units) side by side with those of *ārāzi* or measured area. Since the *jamá* included urban taxes besides land-revenue, we could assume that if the rates of J/A (*jama'* divided by *ārāzi*) vary substantially between contiguous *pargana*, this might be largely due to the varying size of urban taxation (though part of the difference could come from varying patterns of cropping). We can take out the *pargana* containing a known town, and then calculate the J/A of the remaining ('rural') *pargana*. If we multiply the *ārāzi* of the urban *pargana* by J/A of the rural, we would get the land-revenue component of the *jama'* of the urban *pargana*. The remaining portion of the *jama'* could then represent urban taxation.

This device can, however, be used only for regions where measurement of taxable land by Mughal administration was by and large complete. In areas where measurement was still in progress when the *Ā'īn* was compiled, this device could be misleading, because of the strong possibility for the *ārāzi* to be more fully measured in the *pargana* containing *sarkār* headquarters or *ṣūba* capitals than in other (purely rural) *pargana*. Here the J/A for rural *parganas* would appear as exceptionally high whereas that of the urban *parganas* would be much lower. Thus I have had to exclude the Mughal provinces of Ilahābād, Awadh, Mālwā, and Multān, from which only incomplete *ārāzi* figure are available.[49]

For the remaining five provinces, containing measured area figures, the levels of urban taxation appear to be as follows:

	(a)	*(b)*	
Ṣūba	*Urban Tax (dām)*	*Jama' (dām)*	*(a) as % of (b)*
Agra	8,56,23,316	54,49,69,546	15.712
Delhi	2,02,53,570	60,06,87,797	3.372
Lahore	2,10,53,617	56,65,60,144	3.716
Gujarat	8,36,34,996	44,83,39,676	18.654
Ajmer	1,36,58,511	28,70,45,025	4.000

If the urban taxation worked out by us is any index of the degree of urbanization,[50] the *ṣūba* of Gujarat appears at the top. Agra is next to Gujarat with urban taxation at 15.7 per cent of the *jama'*. Interestingly enough Delhi registers the minimum size of urban taxation relative to *jama'*, viz., 3.37 per cent.

At the level of individual towns, Agra records the maximum urban tax-income (viz., 3,18,24,093 *dām*) but the *pargana* of Ahmadābād is a close second with urban taxation amounting to 3,13,02,645 *dām*. Can we then suppose that Ahmadābād was nearly as large a city, *c.*1595, as Agra? Curiously, the size of Lahore appears to be rather small: urban taxation here amounted to only 32,64,848 *dām*.

The pre-eminence of Gujarāt as the most urbanized region has wider implications for our understanding of the nature of Mughal towns. It has often been asserted that the Mughal towns tended to be 'camp'-cities depending on the court and the potentates' camps. Such towns subsisting directly on the expenditure of the ruling class are thought to be totally dependent on movements of the court or the *jāgīrdār*'s headquarters. But the high level of urbanization in Gujarat could have had almost nothing to do with the military encampments. It can only be explained in terms essentially of the inland long distance trade generated by the demand for luxuries and other craft products fashioned in Gujarat, from members of the ruling class and their subordinate classes in whatever towns ('camp'-cities or not) in other regions that they might be residing.[51] We must realize that this could not be true just of Gujarat alone. In every region there would be specialized manufacturing centres catering to the demand of the ruling class, even if no *jāgīrdār* established his household and stationed his retainers there. These manufacturing towns were then distinct from the so- called 'camp-cities', though many towns, of course, might well partake of a dual character being both encampments and manufacturing centres.

Though parasitic in nature (being based on consumption of agricultural surplus), the Mughal towns constituted a large and intricate demographic and economic sector. Large urban populations unevenly spread throughout the Empire subsisted on service, manufactures, trade and transport functioning through a complex economic and social network. The urban decline of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which must be assumed if our estimates of the urban population of the Mughal Empire are accepted, was not simply a

matter of the disappearance of decadent princes, courts and their hangers-on. It was part and parcel of the destruction of a whole once-pulsating economy by colonial Tribute and Free Trade.

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13. Shireen Moosvi, "Production, Consumption and Population in Akbar's Time", *IESHR*, X(2), 1973, pp. 193-4.
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15. This includes the amount spent on buying imported horses as well as the silver and gold going into hoards: for details and reasons of its inclusion, see my *Economy of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 276-8.
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17. F. Buchanan, *An Account of the Districts of Bihar and Patna in 1811-1812*, vol. II, Patna, 1928, p. 774.
18. To meet the possible objection that not an insignificant proportion of expenditure of the ruling class on craft products would have been on manufactures imported from outside the Mughal Empire, one may stress the well recognized fact that the imports in Mughal Empire were almost invariably paid for by exports of goods (mainly cotton textiles). Expenditure on the imported items (including the sums spent on buying imported horses and precious metals) thus in fact induced increased craft production. The expenditure of the ruling class on purchases of imported merchandise and specie can therefore be legitimately included in the amount laid out on craft goods.
19. It excludes the part of *jama'* that went to meet the pay-claims of the *jāgīrdārs'* retainers paid through sub-assignments, which imply a largely rural expenditure.
20. *Economy of the Mughal Empire*, p. 131.
21. Some retainers of the *jāgīrdārs* were paid through sub-assignments; we assume that their number was about a quarter of that of retainers. Their income was, of course, a part of the *jama'* (net income of the court and the Imperial ruling class), but it by and large remained within the rural sector and has thus been considered separately here.
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40. *Early Travels*, pp. 17-18. 41. Ibid.

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51. The overseas trade was important for Gujarat, but it alone surely could hardly have accounted for more than a small part of its urban economy.

19

Marx, The Asiatic Mode of Production and India*

DIPTENDRA BANERJEE

A. *Introduction*

No other Marxian notion has been more maligned, by Marxists and non-Marxists alike, than the concept of the Asiatic mode of production (hereafter as the AMP). At times, it has even been regarded with sheer contempt: didn't Marx feel as cocksure of Asian society as Tom Macaulay felt of Indian culture? What Marx gave us in the name of the AMP, we're told, was not the real orient at all, but a bubble world of the orient-that-might-have been! The commonest criticism is of course empirical, sometimes even empiricist; it was, as it were, with a minimum of historical luggage that Marx is said to have travelled through the limitless expanse of the orient.

I do not wish however to raise here what seems to be a very legitimate epistemological question of whether it is licit to conjure away the concept of the AMP from the domain of Marx's overall theoretical problematic and subject it to various factual criticisms. Without, that is, either situating these free-floating "facts" in a parallel or counter problematic or accommodating these "new" facts within the framework of the original concept leading if necessary to a "paradigmatic shift".[1] I am aware, though, of the claim, which is of course highly disputable, that the concept of the AMP itself falls outside the very terms of Marx's theoretical problematic or is, at best, related to it "awkwardly at a tangent".[2]

Briefly, the major criticisms directed against the concept of the AMP have been that it is *conceptually* inchoate,[3] *theoretically* muddle-headed,[4] *philosophically* contradictory,[5] and *empirically* untenable.[6] Some critics, again, are definite that there exists no *theory* of Indian/Asian/oriental society in Marx, whose main concern had been to determine the conceptual specifics of Western capitalism. Since, for Hegel as for Marx, every object is defined by its "other", the uniqueness of Western capitalism—the principal if not the sole object of the latter's study—can reveal itself only via its contrast with *other* systems of production. In the *logical* scheme of Marx's presentation, thus, the capitalist West very much needed its "other", which in this case was provided by Asian or oriental societies, the AMP being a short-hand for such non-European systems of production. It was this logical need for the "other" which mattered most to Marx; it did not even matter to him if the empirical data cited by him in constructing this Asiatic "other" were inaccurate.[7] Finally, in a more recent, high-powered criticism, Heinz Lubasz, by means of what he calls a "genetic"

analysis, tries to trace the way in which Marx is said to have conceived the concept of the AMP, through the double means of dialectical logic and retrospective speculation; and Lubasz then argues that the notion is "profoundly misleading" and "fundamentally flawed".[8] I look at this problem of conceptualization of the AMP from an altogether different angle, as I shall try to show below. Here, I wish to state simply that before one is in a position to criticize a concept, one is perhaps called on to be clear about what it stands for, about what it *is* and what it is *not*.

Unfortunately most of the aforementioned criticisms of the AMP are generally unmindful of late Marx's efforts at collecting materials on certain non-European social formations and analysing their structural specificities for their own sake. Whatever it was, this work did not constitute, to be sure, an attempt to present these non-European societies as the "other" of Marx's something. Indeed most criticisms of the AMP are primarily directed towards a version of this concept which is livid with such armchair idioms of received Marxism as the multiplicity of closed-off primitive village communities; the utterly self-sufficient character of their simple domestic economy of cultivation and hand crafts; the absence of private property and predominance of communal ownership and labour; the near-absence of urban production and exchange; the all-pervasive domination of a repressive "oriental-despotic" State founded upon its agro-managerial function, turning the whole "Asiatic" society into a vast area of darkness in contrast to the "free" and "multi-centred" society of the pre-modern West; an utterly vegetative and unchanging mode of life and work in an all-pervading scenario of superstitions and squalor, etc. It is true of course that during the initial phase of his encounter with the non-European/oriental social structures, in which he was trying to come to grips with the empirical problem of an "oriental" society (i.e., India) not yet conceived as a "mode of production", Marx at one point of time or another toyed with some of these inherited notions, while some others have been plainly imputed to him. I am not however sure whether these so-called features of the AMP in their conventionally-formulated nuances can be accepted at their face-value for the purpose of presenting Marx's views on the subject. For, some of these either contradict Marx's eventual findings on the problem or are incompatible with certain key terms of his overall theoretical problematic. Some others, again, have become valueless by exaggeration!

Lest I be misunderstood, I hasten to state that it is not my purpose here to add one more polemical exercise to the countless disputations already existing on the AMP. Nor do I wish to provide a "revisionist" version of the concept, for the simple reason that one needs to have first a more or less rounded version of the notion to introduce revisions in; and neither Marx nor any later Marx-scholar appears to have provided us with a non-random and systematic-analytic account of the AMP in sufficient terms. Also, I do not intend to "inflate" the concept of the AMP by attaching new meanings to it, although I have no objection in principle towards introducing, with sufficient ingenuity, necessary theoretical modification if and when history and logic so call for. After all, all concepts

belonging to Marxian problematic are empirically-grounded, real-life concepts and are utterly unlike the terms and categories of speculative philosophies which pretend to offer self-complete and hence closed theoretical systems.[9] What then is to be billed as the first, prior task is to *reconstruct* the concept of the AMP in the light of some of Marx's first-order generalizations and a number of suggestive pointers left by him particularly in his late writings especially on pre-colonial India. It is with this objective in mind that I try to offer in the last section of this essay some notes towards such a reconstruction of the AMP.

To do this is however to treat the available source-materials in a special manner, a manner dictated by the peculiar nature of these materials themselves. What is indeed necessary is to follow the methodological injunctions provided by Antonio Gramsci for the study of the history of ideas with regard especially to a theoretical problematic that was not systematically expounded by its founder, Karl Marx.[10] Briefly, Gramsci spoke of the need in this case to look for the "essential coherence" of Marx's thought

> not in each individual writing or series of writings but in the whole development of the multiform intellectual work in which the elements of the conception are implicit.

While this may involve a preliminary philological work, such a procedure must call for discretion and caution in treating the author's posthumous publications and unpublished manuscripts as well as his private correspondence. The most important thing however is to look for those elements in Marx's thought which were to become "permanent" and stable. This bespeaks the need for a "search for the *Leitmotiv*, for the rhythm of the thought as it develops", which is more important than "single casual affirmations and isolated aphorisms". Necessary also is the task to identify the partial doctrines and provisional speculations in the author's thought, in order that the ultimate "discards" can be isolated. Given the peculiar nature of the source-materials at hand, this indeed seems to be a good procedure for our study of the Marxian concept of the AMP.

I end this section with one more introductory observation. Although, as is well known, Marx himself expressed his desire on more than one occasion to compose "a brief *historical* sketch on the development of the economic categories and relationships", such a historical project being described by him as "a work in its own right",[11] this work on the pre-capitalist modes of production [hereafter as the PCMPs] of history Marx was not able to complete during his life-time. Nevertheless it is possible I think to identify in Marx's own work at least the *mode* of his conceptualization of the PCMPs including the AMP; and I first refer to it briefly and try to draw out its significance, which I believe will be surely helpful in grasping the issues and problems relating to the notion of the AMP. My preliminaries also include a brief clarification of what I think the categories of "mode of production" and "social formation" stand for, especially in the context of pre-capitalist times.

B. *Preliminaries*

First, then, the mode of Marx's conceptualization of the PCMPs including the AMP and its implications. As I have argued elsewhere,[12] the point of departure for Marx's overall theoretical problematic and methodology was the critical grasp of the *present* reality of his time, seen and conceived as the existential being of the capitalist mode of production (hereafter as the CMP). Interestingly enough, Marxian analysis did not start from the dawn of history and then arrive through an evolutionist scheme to the present reality of his time. Marx began with the latter precisely because, as he explained in the 'Einleitung' preceding the *Grundrisse*, the categories appropriate to the more developed reality of the present are generally more accurate and more concrete than the categories expressing the less developed realities of the past societies. For instance, the category of "transport" appropriate to *ancient* times, which might mean animal- or man-driven carts and boats and the like, cannot look beyond these contraptions and envisage the use of steamships and automobiles and aeroplanes, things which are the subject of the much more developed category of transport in *modern* times. The more developed and more complex a historical reality, the more adequate and more inclusive are thus the categories born of it and applied to it.

These were the considerations which prompted Marx to start from the most concrete relations of the present reality of his day, for the categories expressing this latest reality are those which are by and large the most developed, hence most accurate and most concrete. To take up an evolutionist mode of inquiry, to begin with the beginning of history, would then amount to throwing away the more concrete categories in favour of the less concrete. So Marx began with the categories born of and appropriate to the present reality of the CMP, which enabled him to arrive at its critical-*existential* grasp, through a dialectical procedure founded upon the unity of method and object of study. Thus resulted his critical *concept* of the existential being of the CMP, a concept which could demystify the apparently confounded and confounding capitalist relations and show them as representing a definite structure in history.

As Lukacs[13] showed in 1919, it's only with the demystification of the present reality of the CMP, with capitalism's critical-*existential* grasp, that a two-ended possibility opened up—on the one hand, the possibility of setting up the demystified relations of the future based upon a critical-*transcendental* grasp of the CMP by evaluating capitalism's socialist *potentia*, duly measured against all the counteracting tendencies; and on the other, the possibility of grasping the demystified relations of the past, the distinctive specificities of the PCMPs including the AMP, through a critical-*historical* grasp of the CMP. In the latter case with which I am concerned here, it is obvious that without the prior grasp of the existential rationality of the CMP, all the antecedent realities of the AMP and other PCMPs would either look like the formal structures of the present reality of capitalism or else assume utterly alien and senseless shapes. At the same time, the very grasp of the existential reality of the CMP would remain hazy if its distinctiveness is not exposed by means of its contraposition to other

realities of history, the realities of the PCMPs. As Marx showed in *Capital*, it's only when we arrive at these other historical forms of production and contrast them with the CMP that the whole mystery of the commodity culture of capitalist society vanishes, and the CMP reveals itself as a distinct historical structure. The same contrast is also the essential first step for Marx in unmasking the distinctive specificities of all the antecedent modes of production including the AMP.

Thus the Marxian conceptualization of the PCMPs is founded upon two distinct but dialectically related levels of analysis. The first brings forth the critical concept of the CMP to act as the methodological indicator for the study of the PCMPs. On this level, the distinction between the CMP on the one hand and the PCMPs on the other becomes the major point of emphasis. It is the framework of this capitalism-precapitalism contraposition which, in confrontation to the originality of the CMP as an independent-economic value- creating process, postulates all the PCMPs apparently as a unity. That was why Marx would often posit certain uniformities and likenesses in them. On this level, their differences—the distinctions among the AMP, the ancient-Western mode of production (hereafter as the WAMP) and the medieval-feudal mode of production (hereafter as the FMP)—were brought only negatively, even implicitly, under the leading light of the concept of the CMP. As the AMP is the only *non-Western* mode of production involved here in its contrast with the materially more developed CMP (which originated in *Europe* due to reasons of history), it is no surprise that the contrast between the two, organized under the guidance of the concept of *Western* capitalism on this level of Marx's conceptualization, would prompt, as it actually has prompted, a facile charge of Eurocentrism being at the back of much of his views on the orient!

The second, interconnected level of Marx's conceptualization of the PCMPs begins with the indications provided by its first level of analysis, together with a correct grasp of the past forms of production. This last project makes it incumbent that sufficient historical information be organized, in terms of a logical-systematic analysis, to bring out the inner mechanisms and boundary of each of the PCMPs—the AMP, WAMP and FMP—in a comparative framework. As in the case of Marx's logical-systematic study of the CMP, here also the task begins with the postulation of certain initial presuppositions, derived not merely logically but also based upon such empirical-historical substantiation as may be necessary to build up the theoretical constructs of the AMP, WAMP and FMP. Methodologically speaking, as Marx explained the point, although in a different context,

> all of these fixed presuppositions themselves become fluid in the further course of development. But only by holding them fast at the beginning is their development possible without confounding everything.[14]

This bespeaks the need for provisional simplification at the initial stage of inquiry, while admittedly the course of further investigation may well bring forth modifications, leading even to paradigmatic shifts.

Any exposition hence of Marx's conceptualization of the PCMPs should throw into bold relief its two complimentary but hierarchically related levels: first, the PCMPs as viewed and considered in *contraposition* to the CMP, the result largely of a logical-systematic abstraction made on the basis of certain initial presuppositions founded upon a preliminary review of empirical data; and secondly, the internal *differentiation* in the category of the PCMPs, in other words, the distinctions among the AMP, WAMP and FMP, based upon further empirical substantiation under the "guidance" of the knowledge gained through the first level of Marx's conceptualization.

In this connection it would be instructive I believe to recall how Marx himself wanted to organize his materials on the orient before and after he came up in 1850 with the distinguishing term of the "Asiatic mode of production". Witness that the two stages of Marx's conceptualization of the AMP largely corresponded to its two levels of analysis, the work in the second stage remaining incomplete, being primarily confined to the task of noting down and organizing new empirical materials on the societies of the AMP (as well as on the early history of mankind). However, as is well known, Marx's first encounter with certain societies of the non-European world had led him in 1853 to write a few essays mainly for the *New York Daily Tribune* and throw up a few speculations in his private correspondence with Engels. Observe that Marx was still far removed from the formulation of a distinctive *mode of production* under the banner of the AMP, although some of the generalizations thrown up by him in 1853 and thereabouts are often regarded as his definitive statements on the AMP. Actually Marx's speculations of this period represented his first empirical effort to grasp the particularity of the received notion of "oriental society"; while at least one of the essays of 1853 was even composed with an extraneous design.[15]

In fact, it was around 1857-58, what constituted I believe the initial phase of the first stage of Marx's conceptualization of the AMP, that Marx developed in the *Grundrisse* his theoretical constructs of the PCMPs (including what may be called a preview of the AMP) on a highly abstract plane, in contradistinction largely to the existential being of the CMP, and at the same time began his work to unmask the inner rationality of the PCMPs. The earlier, inherited notion of "oriental society" was then transcended in his well-known 'Preface' to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* of 1859 to the distinguishing term of the "Asiatic mode of production". This new conception was further developed during the 1860s, in *Capital* and *Theories of Surplus Value*. Throughout this first stage of Marx's conceptualization of the AMP, the concept, although presented in a logical sense, still called I believe for further systematization both in logical-causal and historical-empirical terms. Doubtless, Marx's primary concern during this entire stage was to throw sufficient light upon the distinctive character of the CMP; the AMP and other PCMPs constituted a contrasting theme within the bounds of the major project to expose the specificity of capitalism. It was in an indirect manner, and only occasionally in explicit terms, that some attempt would be made during this stage to bring to

view the reproductive mechanism of the AMP and other PCMPs. The work here was thus mainly related to what I have called the first level of Marx's conceptualization of the PCMPs and only partly connected with its second level.

During the years since the late 1870s, which represented the second stage of Marx's conceptualization of the AMP, it was now a work on the aforementioned second level—the determination in sufficient empirical terms of the reproductive specificity of at least one of the PCMPs, the "Asiatic" system of economy, under the omnibus guidance of the knowledge derived from the analysis conducted on the first level. This work was only begun by Marx during the last years of his life, on the basis of an intensive use and highly critical reception of the materials on the orient and on the early history of mankind available to him, as is shown by his draft letters of 1881 to Vera Zasulich and his critical excerpt notes from Morgan, Maine, Phear, Lubbock and others, especially Kovalevsky. Cut short by his death in 1883, the work remained unfinished. But here was now a new perspective, the perspective of what I have described as the second level of Marx's conceptualization of the PCMPs.

To clear the decks for our discussion, I now refer to a second problem, which is related to the theoretical import of the categories of "mode of production" and "social formation", especially in connection with a *pre-bourgeois* economy.[16] Stated in simple terms, a social formation represents I believe the concrete totality of the economic, political and cultural processes under the overall guidance of a particular mode of production, with its own "laws" of motion and reproduction. As analytical abstractions, these categories, needless to say, are capable of offering a sharper insight into the phenomena working in the depths; and no-one expects that the empirical reality of a historical state of affairs would stand in a one-to-one relationship with its abstracted conception. Indeed this "immediate" historical reality is apt to be marked by the "disturbances" of actual empirical variations and contingent developments; it may even reveal the presence of such economic forms and relationships as are not ideally compatible with the hegemonic and predominant mode of production. In this sense, the *multiform* character of a social formation—the existence of several unlike economic forms under the exacting discipline of a particular mode of production, which itself has its characteristic but varying economic forms—is already presumed in the very category of social formation. As Marx pointed out in the 'Einleitung' of 1857, in all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over and affects the character of the rest.[17]

In Marxian problematic, again, a purely quantitative approach adopted to evaluate the relative predominance of the different types of economic forms has I believe no straightforward relevance in defining which mode of production is dominant and hegemonic. That was why Marx himself was not hesitant at all in describing the Russian social structure of the late 19th century in terms of his category of the "Asiatic" or "semi-Asiatic" formation, because he thought, rightly or wrongly, that it was characterized by a mode of production that was associated with a community-oriented form of property and labour and founded principally upon a mode of surplus extraction organized by the State and its

agents and officials. And this, despite the fact that at that time, on Marx's own *quantitative* reckoning, private landed property which included the best-quality land of the country accounted for nearly half its land, not to speak of the State holdings.[18] In Marxian theory, it is the *qualitatively* hegemonic role of the predominant mode of production which cuts to size all economic values and all economic forms that might have existed in the broader social formation.

In his conceptualization of the CMP also, Marx had to proceed along the same lines. In conceiving the CMP, as is well known, he began with the presupposition that the producers must have already been *separated* from their means of production and means of subsistence—the fundamental precondition to the emergence and reproduction of capitalist economy. Even when in actuality "the relation (between the producers and their means of subsistence and production) is in direct contrast to it", he said, it has to be presumed if things were not to be confounded. For,

> *separation* appears as the normal relation in this society. When therefore it does not in fact apply, it is presumed ...; for ... in this society *unity* appears as accidental, *separation* as normal.[19]

Thus, even in bourgeois society in the case of those economic forms and relationships which strictly speaking are not compatible or consistent with the fundamental requirement of the CMP, Marx would presume their homology with the latter. Observe that Marx was speaking here of a mode of production, the CMP, which for him represented, because of the clarification and generalization of the purely *economic* process of value creation, a universalizing tendency for the *first* time in history. It follows *e contrario* that since the purely economic process of value creation would not be fully clarified in a PCMP, the latter would be all the more unable to achieve that kind of economic uniformity in society that is typical and characteristic of the CMP. Compared to the latter, its power *vis-a-vis* other economic forms of production existent in the given social formation, its power to conquer them or even affect them, would be necessarily weaker.

In Marxian problematic, then, it is presumed that in a pre-bourgeois social formation dominated by the AMP (or any other PCMP) there would exist several different forms of production, some of which may not have been consistent or compatible with the reigning mode of production. In the AMP these forms may well include feudal-type or slave-like forms and relationships, that is, besides the various characteristic forms of the dominant mode of production. But, unable to mould the broader system of economy prevailing in the society, these slave-like and feudal-type relations and forms themselves would be moulded by the community-oriented and the service-State pattern of economy of the AMP. However, such a conceptualization of a PCMP loses much of its analytic importance when a pre-bourgeois social formation is said to be characterized by a simple coexistence of several unlike economic forms, that is, without proper weightage being attached to them in order to delineate the character of the reigning mode of production. Thus, while Samir Amin reduced the concept of the AMP into a simple, all-purpose "tributary mode of production" which unites

the "patrimonial" and "prebendal", "feudal" and "Asiatic" forms of surplus extraction,[20] Chris Wickham separates the two again and asserts that the tributary mode of every pre-capitalist oriental society had witnessed the rise and coexistence of rent (private feudal landowning) and tax (the State) as two major but antagonistic forms of surplus extraction.[21] Although Wickham largely succeeds in his historical account of several oriental societies in which either the rent or the tax mode of surplus extraction could become crucial and decisive, the centrality of the extra-economic factors in the appropriation of surplus in a pre-bourgeois economy remains unexplored in his excellent resume.

C. *Notes Towards Reconstructing the AMP*

Having stated some of my presuppositions, I now present my notes[22] towards a reconstruction of the concept of the AMP, citing most of the illustrative empirical material from pre-colonial India, as was done by Marx himself. And I divide these notes, for the sake of convenience, under three broad headings—the village community, the non-agricultural sector, and the State.

1. *The Village Community:* Like other PCMPs, the AMP also represented for Marx part of a vast context of nature, in which man's relation with nature, with nature's earth, mediated by numerous village communities, was expressed mainly in arable farming and partly in scattered pastoral activities. Marx's critical excerpt notes from Maxim Kovalevsky[23] made it amply clear that in India and, by extension, in other social formations of the AMP, the full-blown and advanced form of the village community consisting mainly of "neighbours" and partly of kinsmen had gradually emerged, in an evolutionary historical process, out of the disarticulation of its "original" or archaic form, which had been usually wreathed in kinship bonds. The village community now stood as the central grass-roots institution in the Marxian view of the AMP.

The concept of the AMP cannot be hence patient of the interpretation[24] that it represented for Marx a scenario of *primitive* communal organizations, and nothing much besides. It seems to me that the source of this claim lies, first, in the unwarranted equation of the "original" form of the community with its full-grown and developed form; and secondly, in the uncritical adherence to the view, which Marx himself discarded in no uncertain manner, that the naturally-arisen, primitive form of the human community everywhere was a derivation, and hence could be ideally reconstructed, from what he called the "fundamental" or original form of Indian/oriental community. It is true that it was for quite some time that Marx had held on to this view.[25] But it was not for Marx to hold fast to an old speculation if subsequent investigation called for its revision or even outright rejection.

Thus, just as after reading Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877) Marx revised his earlier view of the family as the first form of human association (which he now found was represented by the gentes and the tribes), he likewise discarded, on the basis of further investigation into primitive life, his earlier view of the archetypal or original form of Indian/Asiatic village community as a universal, global paradigm of archaic history.[26] Thus, he wrote in 1881, showing for instance that

> the agricultural *rural commune* ... emerged in Germania from a more archaic type; it was the product of spontaneous development *rather than being imported ready-made from Asia.*[27]

Marx was now in a position to theorize that the archaic communities of the world were not cut to a single mould; they exhibited "a series of different forms".[28]

At the same time, the overview of the process that Marx noted in his critical review of Kovalevsky's related account, which was based upon certain British administrative reports as well as India's *smṛti* literature beginning with the Code of Manu, clearly revealed the dissolution of the archaic forms of the community and their gradual replacement by its full-blown and advanced forms in ancient and early medieval India. It is not necessary to imagine that this process of the rise of the post-primitive, advanced forms of the village community in India as the central grass-roots institution of the agrarian sector in the AMP would be uniformly repeated, and repeated in all its sequential and other nuances, in the case of other "oriental" societies based upon this mode of production. Even in the Indian case, the process, Marx observed, was marked by uneven temporal and wide regional variations, which might have been caused by various material as well as physical, demographic and historical factors.

What however is important to note is the remarkable evolutionary transformation, indeed a transformation marked by a profound caesura, from the original situation. It goes without saying that in the "fundamental", primitive form of the "Asiatic" community it was mainly kinship bonds which determined the boundaries between corporate communities; inside such a community descent naturally determined what had been a restricted access to resources, which were controlled by the community. With the emergence of the full- grown village community in the AMP, this control was to a greater or lesser extent undermined, for part of the resources came to be systematically extracted by the State. The scenario was now that of a post-primitive political society founded upon numerous village communities at the base, consisting no longer exclusively of kinsmen. Wreathed in various inequalities of economic, social and, in the case of India, casteist trappings, and still displaying occasionally the influence of modified kinship bonds, the village community now stood in its highly altered form, moulded as it was above all by the demands of a post-lineage, political society, especially by the State's appropriation of the surplus or the fruits of surplus.

In reviewing Kovalevsky's analysis of the factors underlying the process of the dissolution of the archaic and the rise of the full-blown form of the community, Marx did not appear to have endorsed the former's partial and hesitant emphasis upon the role of urbanization as a causal element in the process. On the other hand, he agreed with Kovalevsky's views on the two factors of the individualization of the wealth relations and the emergence of a larger political society. The former tendency was induced mainly by the growing inequality in the possession of land and wealth, causing various other inequalities in rank, status and social power, in which the priestly caste, here as

elsewhere, played a leading part. Closely related to this was the coming into being of a larger political society and the State. This was a process that was initially based upon the rise of supra-local tribal heads and of chiefships, leading eventually to the emergence of the head of the people as sovereign.[29] No fundamental changes in the emergent scenario, in which the village community came up to assume a central place in pre-colonial India's mainstream rural society, were however introduced by the Muslim rulers during the medieval period, as both Kovalevsky and Marx agreed.[30]

This emergent profile of the village community is not basically unlike what Marx in his draft-letters of 1881 to Vera Zasulich described as "semi-Asiatic" Russia's agricultural community (*commune agricole*), applicable *mutatis mutandis* to the developed form of the village community in other "Asiatic" countries as well. The community had already destroyed or modified the original narrow but powerful blood-ties of earlier kindred groups and had thus grown much stronger, "more capable" as it was now "of adapting and expanding, and of undergoing contact with strangers". Life within the community was now marked by a combination of private possession/ownership and cultivation of plots by the household families and common possession/ownership and cultivation of plots by the household families and common possession/ownership of the "appurtenances", as well as by the accumulation of mobile property including cattle and their increasing use in agriculture by the member families, the appropriation of the fruits of their labour by the families etc. Such a situation was no doubt apt to induce a growing differentiation in the wealth relations among the member families and hence conflicting interests, especially under, Marx showed, "the fiscal pressure of the State". It would be then but a short step to the transformation of arable land into private property and then even to private appropriation of waste lands, pastures and forests, which had already become the communal appendage of private property.[31]

In his critical excerpt notes on Kovalevsky's account of the dissolution of the archaic and the rise of the full-grown community, Marx himself noted several phases in the process, beginning with the indivisible landed property of the kin community and ending with the emergence of the property in land of private individual household families "in the modern sense".[32] All this eventually resulted in the landed properties of all kinds, for instance, enormously large properties on the one hand, and numerous parcels of the peasant household families on the other.[33] Within the village community of the AMP, thus, the grass-roots unit of production came to be represented by the latter—the holding of the individual peasant household family. The form of the holding no doubt varied from place to place, depending among others upon the differing local customs and practices, these practices and customs being looked upon by most legal commentators of India as almost sacrosanct. When, for example, the Code of Manu advises the king to establish as law the rules set up by brāhmaṇas, the advice is appended to the express proviso that the king's law is expected to "agree with the juridical customs of the provinces, districts, castes and families".[34]

It is well known how Marx in 1853, in his first effort to grapple with the property situation of pre-colonial India, readily accepted Bernier's thesis about the absence of private property in the East. Although even at that time Marx had his own doubts about the supposition and although the Indian situation had not yet been conceptualized by him in terms of a "mode of production", many commentators find the postulate of the absence of private property to have been an essential feature of the Marxian notion of the AMP. Admittedly, Marx himself was not unambiguous in this matter. The reports he studied were baffling; and even six years later, in 1859, he was saying that what had existed in pre-colonial India had been "a peculiar constitution of landed property".[35] After all, "free private ownership of land", Marx showed, is "a *very recent* concept".[36] This in fact is a bourgeois concept of property, which cannot be defined, Marx also showed, without exposing "all the social relations of bourgeois production".[37] In the case of pre-colonial India, the question of ownership was defined by a set of entirely different social relations.

That was why late in his life Marx did not appear to have been surprised by Kovalevsky's perplexed statement that

> in no country (was there) such a variety in the form of land relations as in India.[38]

Indeed, the predominance of varying local customs and practices in the sphere of landed property relations made the development of a uniform civil law and its codification extremely difficult in pre-colonial India. It was this customary law which provided the chief material for the composition of the oldest codices of India's *smṛti* literature, resulting in what Marx described as "the meagre, purely juridical, and by choice purely ethical rules".[39] No wonder then that he would agree with Maine's finding that in contrast to Rome which not merely taxed but also legislated, India only taxed and seldom made laws.[40] Civil law in India remained undeveloped and weak.

It would be then quite in order to assert that the form of the peasant holding within the village community of the AMP would be expressed in the shape of many different shades of pseudo-communal and private property. To be sure, the rights of private ownership in the AMP remained largely unclarified and unarticulated. In one sense, however, the whole question of the absence or presence of free private property, as has been said, cannot be viewed as "an independent relation, a category apart, an abstract and eternal idea" which is "nothing but an illusion of metaphysics or jurisprudence".[41] The socio-political relations in the AMP, after all, ensured that here the appropriation of surplus could systematically take place irrespective of who held the formal title to landed property. As Dunn forcefully argues:

> The proper question to ask is not, 'who holds formal titles to the means of production ?' but rather, 'what actual advantages accrue to the owner as contrasted with the nonowner ?' After all, a situation is theoretically possible in which, while the means of production are formally in the hands of private individuals or non-state corporations, the state takes all (or the lion's share)

> of the surplus product in the form of taxes and other dues, and in addition can draft the local population for compulsory work on state projects. If such a situation existed, the social order so constituted would in fact differ significantly from that characteristic of Greco-Roman antiquity and from the ordinary kind of feudalism.[42]

This precisely is the problem that the concept of the AMP sets in with regard to the manner and mechanism of surplus appropriation in an "Asiatic" country, whether or not the question is connected with the rights of ownership.

What however mattered in the actual process of production, and mattered a great deal, was not any abstract or formal rights of property (especially in those countries of the AMP in which land was plentiful),[43] but the actual use of the land by peasant cultivators. For, customarily speaking, the "rights" of the peasant families over their lands in "Asiatic" countries seemed to have been based upon their "rightful" use and exploitation. As both Kovalevsky and Marx agreed, the government and the authorities of the village community would generally insist that neither the peasant who had not left his field uncultivated nor the peasant who had brought a piece of the waste land under the plough could be expropriated if he duly paid his dues.

As I have claimed elsewhere,[44] the entire milieu was beautifully captured by C. Van Vollenhoven in 1919 by what he proposed in response to the question of whether or not Indonesian customary law (*adat*) allowed the peasant (*petani*) to hold a piece of land as his property. Vollenhoven's answer was that although the holding rights of the peasant household family were usually "crammed" by the *adat* restrictions, a *petani* could always point to a piece of land and say, "This ricefield is *mine*!"[45] After all, the *petani* would be generally in *de facto* possession of his ricefield. The point would no doubt be relevant to every society belonging to the AMP. What might differ to some extent was of course the character of this land-use, which would depend upon a combination of various factors—not merely the peasant's customary rights over his land, but also such matters as the nature of the family labour force, the surrounding physical conditions, the availability of sufficient land, the prevailing technology, the existing customs and practices, the interests of those who guided and controlled the village council, etc.

It is easy to see that the activities of the village council (the *panchayat* in India) and of the village headman would vary from place to place and time to time, depending among others upon the character and constitution of the village community itself. In the more populous, kin-based communities, for example, the activities of the council and the headman might be oriented more towards fostering the bonds of kinship than safeguarding and promoting the interests of unrelated neighbours. Similar would be the case *mutatis mutandis* if a particular caste or castes dominated or monopolized the village council. In any case, the village council was apt to become in the course of time a body dominated by "elders" and the "notables"; and the office of the headman was also apt to become eventually hereditary in most places. Marx thought that the so-called "election" of the headman soon became a fiction.[46] Already in 1868, Marx had

spoken of the *non-democratic*, although patriarchal, character of the village management in certain parts of pre-colonial India.[47]

It is also easy to see that the village council and the headman in the AMP would exercise considerable control over the resources of the community and hence over the individual peasant household economy. It was the leading men of the council or, in most cases, the headman himself who then determined the size and quality of the plots allotted to the peasant families as well as their individual shares of the government's land-tax that the community had to pay to the State as its local tax-collecting unit. It was, again, they or the headman who looked after the entire work of administration of the village, interpreting the law, issuing regulations, settling disputes, maintaining law and order, and keeping out "strangers" or admitting them under certain conditions. Indian law enjoined that the functions of police and civil jurisdiction would be performed at the lowest level by the village council, connected with which was the very specific jurisdictions of the family council and the artisan assembly.[48]

There is no need I think to imagine that the mainstream agrarian society of the AMP represented a perfectly equalitarian social structure. Even during the long-ago period to which Manu referred, some kind of social inequality had already affected the community. Kovalevsky wanted to account for such inequality by asserting that the possessors of the larger shares of land now tried to impose their occupancy rights and convert their land into private property in the face of an alleged danger from "newcomers" and the more distant kinsmen. Marx found the argument rather weak because it amounted to explaining an ancient problem by a recent practice. But he did agree with Kovalevsky about the growing stratification in society during the time to which Manu referred, and explained that

> *inequality of the shares* has beecome *great*, which would necessarily imply various other inequalities of wealth, of demands, etc., in short, much other social inequality. Disputes arising therefrom must provoke, on the part of those who are in fact so privileged, the tendency to *entrench themselves*.[49]

In his excerpt notes from Kovalevsky, Marx also noted the longstanding practice of employing "hired hands" in cultivation and the occasional transformation of this or that peasant into a landless labourer.[50] Already in the *Grundrisse* Marx had shown the emergence of the "free day-labourer", sporadically encountered in the "oriental community", as in the Western commune,

> as a consequence of increase of population, release of prisoners of war, accidents by which the individual is impoverished and loses the objective conditions of his self-sustaining labour, owing to division of labour etc.[51]

It is possible to visualize then that in many village communities of the AMP the more affluent household family would cultivate its plot of land not always with its family labour only but often with that of domestic helpers and hired hands.

Marx's critical reading of Kovalevsky's story on the early colonial period in India also showed not merely the longstanding presence of a powerful stratum of *mirasi* peasant proprietors in the rural sector but also the emergence here and there of large and small estates out of the spoliation of the small holdings owing to the activities of the *zamīndārs* and *tālukadārs*, the village headmen, and the typical pre-capitalist usurers as well as the growth of such practices as the *ikbāldāwā*. In many areas, thus, the local people, who "nolens volens (were) forced to go over into the class of tenants dependent on the landlords", were transformed into tenants-at-will. No surprise therefore that "the tax over-burden" as well as the "persecution" of peasants, "not seldom (by) open force", would sometimes result in their flight from the village; and then their plots would be forthwith merged into the estate of the magnate.[52] And this occasionally happened despite the fact that the peasants in pre-colonial India were usually so attached to their land and community that in most cases they would stay over in the village and work as day-labourer rather than seek work or settle elsewhere.[53]

The village community in the AMP thus grew over time into a stratified social structure, with various bound or determined roles for the peasant producers, based upon what Marx called "an unalterable division of labour", which acted with the irresistible force of a law of nature, all the more so when this division of labour was formalized into a caste system, as in India[54] The self-enclosed, hereditary nature of such a division of labour and the normally limited demands of the community, long used to producing mainly use-values, ensured that every village artificer would conduct his operations in the time-honoured traditional way but of course independently.[55] As in all pre-capitalist economies, labour here would be "fixed on all sides, in its income, its content, its location, its scope etc".[56]

Unsurprisingly enough, such an order of things would be in the course of time duly sanctioned and soldified by the status-quoist ideology fostered especially by the priestly pack who, as has been shown, were the first to have induced the growth of differentiated interests in the wealth relations of the members of the community everywhere.[57] Marx thought that in India the power and influence of these "designing" brāhmaṇas had become so great in the course of time that it was they who, in collusion with a widow's relatives interested in her wealth, would merrily sanction such a barbarous practice as that of *satī*. Reminiscent of a kind of archaic barbarism ("burying the man with his property"), *satī* now was simply "a religious murder" and, thanks to its support by the other-worldly brāhmaṇas, stripped of all its native primitiveness.[58]

While the village community of the AMP was thus marked by a certain stratification, contaminated by the distinctions of caste, kinship, sex, religion etc., it still represented a broadly community-oriented *Weltanschauung* which cut across life's most important values. Thus, for example, what was typical of certain Indian communities was that those of their members who for some reason or other had been turned landless could still take part in and draw from what was common in the village. Again, in many cases the temporarily absent

members could get back on their return their original hides on payment of the share of the tax due.[59]

In his reading of Kovalevsky's account of the early colonial regime in India, Marx critically observed among others how the activities of the British had led to an "arbitrary mutilation" of a host of community-oriented customs and practices which used to determine in a large measure the way of life and production in the village. There was above all no Hobbesean "war of all against all", which began to show its ugly teeth only after the colonial land settlements. Again, the English "blockheads", who were looking only for the grand-sired *zamīndārs* in all places, did not find any traces of their existence in many parts of India. The colonial cadastre commissioners were slow to realize that the community-oriented ownership/possession, alongside individual family possession and cultivation, was no strange thing in many areas of the country.[60] Hence Marx's emphasis upon

> the bond of solidarity among the owners of a village, which was not only expressed in the *collective responsibility for land taxes*, but also by means of unified efforts of a whole series of agricultural institutions whose purpose was the *increase of the productivity of the soil.* The (colonial land) system (introduced in the Madras Presidency) disrupted the mutual responsibility of the members of the commune and *by the transfer*—for the tax arrears—of the parcels to any person, often wholly stranger, artificially dissolved the *personnel of the commune* and solidary, neighbourly connectivity.[61]

The English "asses" had even to concede eventually that many of the Indian communities were particularly

> suited to meliorate, and often *wholly ward off*, the effects of *drought, epidemics* and other catastrophes which strike the land at times. Bound to each other by blood ties, neighbourly cohabitation and *community of interest* produced just by these means, they are able to withstand all possible accidents, succumbing to them only for short periods; the danger once past, they devote themselves with the former energy to the work again. In cases of misfortune each can count on all.[62]

The village community of the AMP was then characterized largely by a solidary way of life, in which the principle of "mutual help and support", as well as personal and onymous relationships not easily severed, generally predominated over sectional interests and relations. Did this way of life for Marx signify in terms of our recent-day academic lexicon, the work-ethos of "moral economy"? Recall Marx's due recognition of the fact that the peasants in pre-colonial India, despite some exploitation by the magnates, were generally reluctant to leave their community and their fellow villagers; this would naturally imply that such peasants could be driven to open rebellion in cases only of extreme persecution and repression. It was in such situations that these peasant producers would feel utterly betrayed in their time-honoured and hence

legitimate "entitlement" to their means of subsistence under a predominantly community-oriented way of life and production.

Indeed the typically bourgeois model of man and society, as expressed in such fashionable concepts of "rational peasant", "contest state" etc. or what has been called a "political economy" approach to peasant action—a model in which there is no room for an individual who, as Edmund Leach once said, is pleased to give as much as he can afford rather than bargain for every sack of grain, a model in which men act essentially for personal gain—largely fails to capture the life-principle of the community in the AMP. This is not to claim that Marx's model of the AMP is unmindful of the conflict of interests that worked in the silent depths of society, which might have been marked as well by what is now called "everyday forms" of peasant or subaltern "resistance"—not the exceptional cases of open rebellion or even flight, but such "Brechtian forms" of class struggle as footdragging, false-compliance, evasion of taxes, pilfering, sabotage, slander etc. It seems to me that in his implicit delineation of the notion of the AMP, illustrated in the case of pre-colonial India, Marx did not surely put an *exclusive* emphasis upon the "moral economy" approach to peasant action; he did recognize some social stratification and the sufferings of the peasants. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the bourgeois model of "rational peasant" held only a subordinate place in his scheme of things.[63] Hence his prime emphasis upon a community-oriented life in pre-colonial India in which normally "each can count on all".

Now, the mutuality and togetherness inherent in the life-principle of the village community of the AMP could be realized for Marx through what he called "cooperative labour", through the performance of "communal tasks", and through demands upon and satisfaction from common resources. It is not difficult to imagine that it was the collective entity of the community itself, and not the individual peasant family, which would be in a position to organize these collective tasks, either in utilizing the immediate resources available or in furnishing the essential lacks in these resources, due note being taken of the fact that in most cases such tasks would be limited generally by the modest requirements of production mainly for use. Naturally such unified efforts would vary from place to place, depending among others upon surrounding natural conditions; they were however likely to be organized to a greater or lesser extent with regard especially to those tasks which could not be always tackled by individual efforts.

It is perfectly licit to presume that even for producing mainly use-values, there could be many such tasks, not to speak of the use and exploitation of the so-called "appurtenances" of the village community, such as meadows, pastures, forests, fisheries and even mines, if there were any within or around the village bounds.[64] A part of the community's surplus would constitute here what Marx called "communal reserves", as "insurance" as it were, to meet accidents and disasters, as well as what he called "communal expenses" to meet the costs of maintaining "communal local officials" as well as for constructing and maintaining roads, tanks, canals, religious monuments etc.[65]

Of all these collective activities of the community, the most significant would doubtless be the setting up of what Marx called those agricultural institutions which were apt to increase "the productivity of the soil", above all through the improvement of *irrigational* facilities at the grass-roots level. Admittedly, such irrigational projects or, for that matter, the work of road construction etc. at the village level could not have been large in scale, unless several village communities would join hands or, what was more important, the provincial and central authorities would step in. I think it's only in the latter context that the large-size projects of public utility could "appear" as what Marx called "the work of the higher unity of the despotic regime hovering (*schwebenden*) over the little communities".[66] However, the logic of Marx's argument about the village community's unified efforts in developing a whole "series of agricultural institutions" doubtless implies that a number of collective efforts under the direction of the village council would be undertaken for various purposes—e.g., to bring the common waste land under the plough, to get from outside such essential items as salt, wood, stones, metals and minerals, to organize fairs and festivals, to build religious monuments, and sometimes even to sell the village surplus of food-grain or in certain cases the village production of this or that commercial crop and this or that specialized crafts to raise cash for tax payments.[67]

In a strict sense, then, the economy of the village community in the AMP could not have been fully "self-sufficient". How to explain then the so-called self-contained character of the village community, of which Marx spoke on several occasions ? That this self-sufficiency arose out of the very modest needs of the common people in "Asiatic" countries and the natural fertility of the soil under the lavish care of a warm climate[68] would be a partial and hence defective explanation. A better explanation I believe can be found in what Marx himself pointed out as the common feature of all the PCMPS—the *market-independent* character of their grass-roots economy, as a result largely of the direct, *non-market* access of the overwhelming majority of the peasant producers to their means of production and means of subsistence.[69] These peasant producers of the village community in the AMP might or might not go to the market to buy and sell. It was however not essential for them to go to the market to make a living and survive. Their direct access to their means of subsistence and means of production, based upon the household unity of cultivation and hand crafts, normally ensured their livelihood and existence. It was they who within their communities produced most of the food-grain of the country; and it was, again, they who consumed most of this food. Hence the self-sufficiency of the village community of the AMP. Hence also its apparent impenetrability.

In contrast however to the productive processes of other PCMPs like the WAMP and FMP in which the ruling groups were a direct or indirect participant, either fully or in part, the mainstream productive process of the village communities in the AMP was as a rule almost out of bounds for its ruling groups, represented by the State and its officials and agents. These ruling groups, when necessary, could of course add to their exactions by increasing what Marx called

absolute surplus labour/product by employing coercive methods, even by sheer loot. But it does not stand to reason that they would be in a position to oversee and intervene in the daily affairs of the village community. They did not possess any in-built means to determine, control or even influence the concrete day-to-day management of the village economy. It was the village community or its peasant households—and not the faraway ruling groups—which were as a matter of fact in a position to decide about the kind of labour and technological inputs that would be applied within the peasant economy. While thus the very heart of the country's major production process was outside the direct or indirect control of the ruling groups, the management remained almost exclusively a business of the peasant household families organized under the village communities.[70] No wonder that the State in the AMP had to leave the economic groundwork of production usually untouched. There is then more to it than meets the eye when Marx endorsed Phear's assertion that "in the East, the people practically governed themselves".[71]

As I have already indicated, the village community in the AMP was, as it were, a two-dimensional structure, its one face turned internally towards its own members and the other towards the outside world. And of all its external relations, the most important was without doubt its relationship with the State and its representatives. If it is agreed, as Marx showed,[72] that a socio-economic formation is distinguished—and its specificity revealed—by the way the surplus labour and product are appropriated from the direct producers, then the form and mechanism of this surplus extraction in the AMP can be discerned only at the level of the collective entity called the village community. For, it was at this level that the two main strata of society—the ruling groups represented by those who were in the control of the State apparatus and their officials and agents on the one side and the direct producers at the grass-roots represented by the peasant household families on the other—met for the transfer of the surplus or the fruits of surplus. It was the collective being of the village community, represented in the form of the village council or often in the person of the headman, which acted as the all-important middle-link between the ruling groups and the direct producers, as the State's local unit of tax collection. Needless to say, the State for its part found it extremely convenient to deal with the collective body of the village community or its headman instead of the many individual peasant faimilies constituting the community. Indeed the state could extract a

> larger surplus by exploiting the community, economically solidified as it was, than by exploiting directly the individuals who composed it.[73]

It was in fact easier to do so by also giving the village community the charge of various administrative and police functions of the State at the local level. After all, a recalcitrant or unwilling village community, if it refused to perform or failed in its duties, especially in paying the village assessment, could always be brought to task by the armed retinues of the government.

2. *The Non-agricultural Sector:* Far removed from the mainstream agricultural village economy with its subsidiary handicrafts production in the AMP was the commodity production and exchange sector in the society *as a whole*. In a strict sense, however, this non-agricultural sector could not have been completely separated from the so-called self-sufficient village economy, although the connection between the two must have been usually very thin. Even late in his life Marx confirmed what he had maintained earlier; he agreed with Kovalevsky about the longstanding "pursuit of handicrafts and trade" by a section of the village people "without quitting the rural settlement", a tradition that persisted, in India, for example, well up to the nineteenth century.[74] There must have been then some inter-community exchange and trade at the local level of rural society, admittedly limited by the modest needs of the village folk, long accustomed to producing mainly use- values.[75] Marx consistently maintained that trade and exchange first appeared at the border of the communities, where two or more communities met.[76] This of course is one of Marx's general observations; but there is no reason I believe to presume that the countries of the AMP would mark an exception to this general trend.

The main bulk of commodity production and exchange was however handled outside the generally introvert world of the village communities, in the broader society as a whole. That was because the non-agricultural production sector in the AMP Marx showed was based upon a division of labour which was far different from that within the village community sector. Thus Marx said with reference to India:

> The chief part of the products of the village community is destined for direct use by the community itself, and does not take the form of a commodity. Hence, production here is *independent of that division of labour brought about, in Indian society as a whole, by means of the exchange of commodities.*[77]

In contrast to the commodity-oriented style of life and work based upon an almost immutable division of labour, the commodity production sector of the AMP, founded upon an exchange-based division of labour, had however hardly had an autonomous and self-reproducing life of its own. This was because the latter was to a large extent sustained by the expenditure of the ruling-class income, which was chiefly drawn from the agrarian sector as the State's land-tax. In other words, it was the ruling groups comprised of the monarch and his entourage and officials who constituted the principal market of this commodity production, confined mostly to luxury and consumption goods (and—it is logical to presume—sometimes even armaments or horses which the ruling magnates needed very much).

Such commodities might have also entered the sphere of long-distance trade, overland or maritime. The organization of this long-distance trade would of course depend upon many factors; but it is in this context that I may refer to one of Marx's general findings that right from the ancient times certain exclusive trading communities, like "the gods of Epicurus in the spaces between the

worlds", operated with their carrying-trade in the pores of the broader social formation. The "purity (abstract specificity)" in which these bee-like, closely-knit trading groups appeared in their commercial operations ensured that they would generally seize upon the surplus of the directly useful production (including even food-grains and cloth, one may presume) of the village communities.[78] It is also thus that

> the sea route, as the route which moves and is transformed under its own impetus, is that of trading peoples *par excellence*.[79]

Even the activities of the so-called "sea nomads" (*orang laut*) of Southeast Asia and the maritime Arab communities,[80] about whom so much has been said in recent years, would be quite in keeping with the larger framework of the AMP. It is however more than apparent that there could be many such groups, itinerant or otherwise, connected with the said long-distance trade. It is also apparent, with regard to such exclusive groups as well as others, that most merchant activities, as those of commodity manufacture, would be generally channelled through and affected by the exacting discipline of this or that micro-collective form, representing such individual and social relations as were informed by the principles of caste, kinship, religion or whatever.

In spite of this complicated profile of the non-agricultural sector of the AMP, it cannot be seriously argued that trade in essential items like food-grain was very significant, if only because, as has already been pointed out, most of the food produced within the village communities was directly consumed by their members. The circulation of a major part of the country's production of food was thus held back from entering the sphere of trade and exchange, due note being taken of the exchange of food-grain (and even some commercial crops when these were produced here and there) that was apt to take place to a certain extent if and when the ruling groups wanted to convert into liquid cash the "rent in kind" collected by them as the land-tax.[81] The need to feed the townspeople or even the cases in which such essential items as food and cloth might have been exchanged between the unevenly developed areas of a region—Javanese rice, for example, going to Sulawesi in exchange for some non-essential articles—did not appear to have the potential to alter the essentials of the economic system at the base. Likewise, it would not be illogical to presume that in these circumstances even the direct production by the "magnates" (*Grössen*) (who Marx said[82] directly employed non-agricultural labourers out of their revenue) or such production by the government, if it was organized now and then,[83] would be largely oriented towards manufacturing non-essential and luxury articles as well as, in certain cases, armaments.

In speaking of artisan labour in "Asiatic" societies, Marx mentioned among others the structural tendency shown by all the PCMPs towards "the conversion of fractional work into the life-calling of one man", tending to make trades hereditary and thus eventually setting up the "heredity of castes" and the "exclusiveness of guilds". Marx also specifically cited, with reference to India, certain informed observations on the superb "artisan skill" displayed in the

making, for example, of the "muslins of Dakka" and the "calicoes and other piece goods of Coromandel". Marx was making the point that although the work of the artisan in the AMP, of the Indian weaver, for instance, was highly complicated compared with that of a modern-day manufacturing labourer, the former could achieve an astonishingly high degree of proficiency in his work mainly because the hereditary nature of his profession had enabled his craft-skill to be accumulated through generation after generation, being transmitted "from father to son".[84]

Marx had not had the occasion to study the role of guilds in the organization of labour in "Asiatic" societies; but he did note the existence of artisanal courts and artisanal corporations, as mentioned in the old codices of India's *smṛti* literature.[85] Some hand crafts production in India would have been then directed and controlled by the artisan councils; and it is quite reasonable to imagine that the community-oriented mode of behaviour and activity ("the bees of a hive") would involve here a kind of guide-like regulations moulding the work of artisan labour and the operations of artisan corporations, wherever they existed. Marx did not however offer any comments on the question of the "continuity" of labour in "Asiatic" guilds, although he observed that medieval guilds in Western Europe were capable of making a great advance so far as "the continuity and steadiness of labour" was concerned. This he thought was a significant contrast to the "Asiatic" form of non-guild labour in the countryside, whose work could not have been continuous because of lack of demand; the artisans were always running about to seek custom and could remain busy only when a customer had placed an order.[86]

The demand for manufactures being generally limited in "Asiatic" countries, in which it was principally confined to the officials of the State and its agents including the "landlords"[87] who drew the major share of the country's tax/rent, the manufacturers, Marx said,[88] were bound to have been "few in number". They were not hence bound by competition and would try to sell their wares at "monopoly prices". Likewise would try the traders.

However, in every pre-capitalist economy in which the greater part of the surplus went either to the State and its officials in the form of tax/rent, as in the AMP, or to the landlords in the form of rent, as in the FMP, and in which the self-employed worker generally paid himself his own wages (that is, his subsistence) from the part of surplus retained by him, in which—that is to say—wages and rent/tax were "the main sources of accumulation", the traders and manufacturers would be the only element to make substantial profits.[89] In such situations, under the predominance of the merchant's capital, commercial profits would generally originate from a mercantile ethos that depended mainly upon outbargaining and hoodwinking the customers, who in the case of the AMP are usually its ruling groups, the State and its officials (like their counterparts elsewhere, the slave-owners or the feudal lords), for it was they who commanded the country's "consuming wealth and luxury".[90]

Thus would the manufacturers and merchants of the commodity production and exchange sector in the broader social formation under the AMP usually try

to trap the consuming wealth that was the ruling-class revenue.[91] They would therefore generally move around with the ruling groups, wherever the latter went—or stayed. And so Marx approvingly quoted from Richard Jones:

> From Samarcand, southward to Beejapoor and Seringapatam, we can trace the ruins of vanishing capitals, of which the populaltion left them *suddenly* as soon as new centres of the distribution of the royal revenues, that is, of the whole of the surplus revenues of the soil, were established.[92]

For Marx the "Asiatic" cities were suchlike redistributive and administrative locations or else centres of external trade.[93] The larger ones of them were in essentials little more than artificial superimpositions upon the mainstream rural economy; they were not founded upon their own distinctive, urban-economic infrastructure. They thus represented what Marx called an "indifferent unity of town and countryside".[94] Urbanization in the strict sense of the term was weakly developed in the AMP; and although the revenues redistributed in the so-called magnificient capital cities were significant enough, there were very few structural avenues through which this wealth could be invested for productive purposes in the mainstream rural economy. By its very nature, the mercantile wealth accumulated in the "commercial cities" of the AMP—Marx himself spoke of the rise of such cities even in "ancient" Asia (as in classical Greece and medieval Italy)[95]—also could not have been very productive and was largely unable to affect the mainstream production.

This obvious point hardly needed any clarification—the reason why, it seems to me, Marx did not spell out the causes for the absence of any structural effects worth the name of the rise of such large commercial cities as Dacca, whose renown for admirable textile production Marx had duly mentioned though.[96] In any case, the outline of his argument is clear and unambiguous. Like the merchant's capital, again, usury (which shared by virtue of high rates of interest the exorbitant profits of the merchants)[97] would also continue to do the best out of the ruling-class extravaganza, "without producing anything more than economic decay and political corruption" in the AMP.[98] Despite the progressive expansion of the scale of production and despite some accumulation of wealth[99] including a lot of hoarding[100] in the AMP, the typical "Asiatic" magnate would still remain largely incapable of transforming himself into "that queer saint, that knight of woeful countenance, the 'abstinent' capitalist".[101]

Marx might have underestimated, as Irfan Habib claims,[102] the role of commodity production and circulation as well as the extent of monetization in pre-colonial India, the chief paradigm of his concept of the AMP, especially in comparison with the situation in the FMP of Europe. However, as Habib also points out, what Marx found "in many Roman latifundia, or upon the villas of Charlemage, or more or less during the entire Middle Ages" in Europe was that not the entire bulk of the surplus but "*only a relatively small portion* of that part of the product which represents the landlord's revenue" entered the process of circulation.[103] In contrast, what according to Marx emerged in the extra-village sector of the pre-colonial Indian society as a whole was an elaborate edifice of

commodity production and circulation in which not a part but the *entire* surplus drawn from the countryside as tax/rent was turned into commodity.[104] On Marx's own reckoning, then, commodity circulation in certain societies of the AMP, like India, might have reached, in quantitative terms, a much greater height than that in the PCMPs of the West. And yet manufacture and trade, in spite of their occasional quantitative expansion, remained here more or less confined to the sphere of circulation and consumption, unable to enter in a big way the sphere of production in the depths.

For, neither the ruling-class income drawn chiefly as the land-tax from the surplus of the village economy nor the profits of the manufacturers, merchants and usurers derived mainly from the consumptionistic expenditure of the same ruling-class income could be normally directed towards agricultural and rural-industrial production of the AMP for more or better output. As has been shown, the mainstream agrarian economy remained almost an exclusive business of the peasant producers of the village communities and was usually out of bounds for both the ruling groups and the trading/manufacturing sections. They were not in a position to undermine or disrupt the direct and market-independent connection of the peasant producers with their means of subsistence and means of producation. Thus, speaking of Russian commerce, Marx showed that it had to leave "the economic groundwork of Asiatic production untouched".[105] Urban production in the AMP thus remained for Marx largely parasitical, living off the fat of the agrarian surplus. Herein probably lies one major explanation of the historical problem that has baffled many of our present-day historians of India—the problem of why in late pre-colonial India even the plentiful growth of various "antediluvian" forms of capital and wage-labour including, some claim, spectacular international economic connections failed to make a significant breakthrough in the inner depths of the mainstream economy.[106]

3. *The State :* Contrary to much popular belief, the emergence, formation and sustenance of the State in the AMP for Marx had no mystique about it, hydraulic or otherwise. In his critical review of Kovalevsky's story on the emergence of political society and the State in early India, as can be gleaned from India's oldest legal codices, Marx agreed that it was simply an evolutionary development from a state of affairs which probably witnessed the rise of supra-local tribal heads and the growth of chiefships. Given the presupposed growth of the material-economic hegemony of the chiefs, the eventual transformation of the chief of the community into the head of the people (sovereign) was no mere happenstance. The process might have varied from place to place and time to time; it might have developed through several intermediary positions as well. In the case of India, however, much before the time to which Yājñavalkya and Nārada referred, the power of the chiefs had already grown so much due mainly to their increasing pre-eminence in the wealth relations that their transformation into the heads of the people (sovereign) was no longer an anathema. Thus was set up

> the juridical fiction according to which the head of the people if not de facto then de jure is the highest proprietor of the entire territory occupied by the people.

This amounted to *dominium eminens*,[107] a fairly widespread juridical conception which asserts that the supreme public authority has the right, apparently in the public interest, to dispose of the unoccupied lands of the territory and hand them over to those who wished to till them.[108]

In this connection, with regard to the impact of the State's emergence, Marx was pleased to theorize that the "social function" originally performed by the rural community in the sphere of police, judicial and economic matters would now "appear as having been transferred, assigned to and prescribed by the State".[109] The State had thus emerged in all its grandeur—and, along with it, the "juridical fiction" promoted by the leaders of the State that it was the ultimate proprietor of all the lands of the country. Marx was thus pleased to find in Kovalevsky sufficient confirmation of what he himself had ventured in 1857-58, at an abstract level in the *Grundrisse* and at a not-so-abstract level in one or two of his newspaper articles.

Marx asserted in the *Grundrisse* that the communality immanent in the original common ownership of the clan was apt to be expressed in the course of time in the form of a supra-local, overarching unity as the highest proprietor. To this central authority would then belong a part of the surplus of the numerous little communities below, whose property would hence appear as a cession (*Ablassen*) made by the overarching unity, the State.[110] I may point out that this abstract formulation is not inconsistent in essentials with what Marx was to state in more concrete terms a few months later. He then referred to and endorsed the view that the "alleged property in the Government" was

> nothing more than the derivation of title from the sovereign, theoretically acknowledged in all countries, the codes of which are based on the feudal law and substantially acknowledged in all countries whatever in the power of the Government to levy taxes on the land to the extent of the needs of the Government, quite independent of all considerations, except as mere matter of policy, of the convenience of the owners.[111]

In a despatch written a little over two months ago, in early April 1858, in which Marx had asserted that the land in India "did not belong to the Government", he nonetheless admitted that the government could very well distribute plots out of "large tracts of waste land".[112] The latter right, the right to distribute the waste and uncultivated land, was doubtless related to the notion of "eminent dominion". In any case, it would be then but a short step to a claim involving some kind of "juridical fiction", whether or not consciously or explicitly formulated, that the supreme public authority, the State, had ultimate rights over the landed property of the country.

It was in the first volume of *Capital* that Marx implicitly raised this question of *juridical fiction* in connection with the landed property of England and Scotland:

> The Highland Celts were organized in clans, each of which was the owner of the land on which it was settled. The representative of the clan, its chief or 'great man', was only the *titular* owner of this property, just as the Queen of England was the titular owner of all the national soil.

In the course of time, these "great men", the clan leaders, Marx showed, transformed "on their own authority" their "*nominal* right to the land into a right of private property" in the face of a stiff resistance from their clansmen.[113] This distinction between *fictional* (nominal, formal) and *actual* ownership in Scotland and England, as Krader argues,[114] "holds *a fortiori* for the Asiatic mode of production, where the formality was imputed to the Asians by Europeans". This among others will probably explain why no Indian authority before the 18th century[115] appears to have admitted that the king was the owner of the land in India, while many Europeans thought so. For the latter, the king's claim to the land-tax was practically a claim for "rent" from the entire land. If that was so, land must have been then "owned" by the State.[116]

Much has been made of Marx's hesitant speculation regarding the conquest explanation of "Asiatic" history.This however was a speculation which Marx put forward in a private correspondence—and that too, at a time when he was trying for the first time to grapple with the Indian situation and had not yet conceived his notion of the AMP. This refers to his letter to Engels written in June 1853 in which he hazarded a guess that it was the Muslims who, drawing upon the tenets of Islamic law and polity, introduced "throughout the whole of Asia" including India after its conquest by them the principle of "no property in land".[117] After the conquest then landed property no longer belonged to individual owners but to a collective entity, the State. This piece of speculation, which would make the tax-rent equation look like an innovation introduced throughout Asia by the Muslims, has been described as having a "singular value" in establishing the importance of the part played by purely historical factors in India or Asia.[118] As a matter of fact, however, Marx did not at all pursue this bit of specualtion. He found out that Muslim law did not change much of what had been existing in India and perhaps elsewhere and was, broadly speaking, in accord with the pre-Muslim Indian tradition.

In his critical excerpt notes from Kovalevsky, Marx observed that neither the tenets of Muslim law, especially of the Ḥanafi school, nor their actual application to India nor even the activities of Muslim rulers did entail anything that was apt to change radically the essentials of India's land relations of the preceding age. Of course, with the coming of the Muslims, there emerged a new ruling group at the top, the sultan or the emperor and his hangers-on, as well as their added exactions. But nowhere in Muslim law did Marx find a major tenet that permitted "conversion of the entire conquered land into 'domanial property' ". That was why he was not surprised to find why all the amusing attempts made by the "lousy Orientalists" were to prove futile when they desperately tried to discover at least a single passage in the *Qurān* which could show that the earth was "the property of God" and hence of his chosen representative, the earthly sovereign!

Marx observed that the major tenets of the *Ḥanafī* school made it incumbent upon the Muslim rulers to ensure that the indigenous people of a conquered territory were not expropriated and that the land remained "as a rule" under their former owners/possessors. The law permitted the Muslim rulers to appropriate only the domanial, abandoned and waste land, from which plots could be distributed. For Marx, moreover, this was not a new principle at all for a country like India; here in the former periods it was only from such "free" lands that new distributions were usually made by the government or earlier by the village communities. If the Muslim rulers distributed plots to the believers from other kinds of land, which in any case was rarely done, that was "only admitted as *exceptional law*."

Marx found "rather clumsy" Kovalevsky's contention that the provision in Muslim law for the grant of *iqtā'*, was opt to turn what was allodial into what became "feudal". Some *iqtā's*, Marx observed, were granted in return for certain services rendered to the State by their recipients. Other *iqtā's*, which merely entailed the grant of supervisory or usufructory rights of a limited nature over a determinate period of time, had "no character of a thing (not *jus in re*)" and did not signify any permanency of rights. Above all, what the grant of *iqtā's* signified was that the imposts collected from them, which would have been normally routed to the State treasury (*fiscus*), now went to the coffers of the *iqta'dārs* who were to fulfil certain conditions. Nothing would thereby change for the population of a locality now made an *iqtā'*. They would continue to own or possess their land as before, in accordance with the rights of communal or private property which they had been enjoying previously.

The grants of land to the religious domain according to the provision of Muslim law—the *waqf* property of religious or welfare institutions—would also not change the position of the occupants; the latter would continue to retain their former rights, whatever they were. The only significant difference Marx observed between *waqf* and *iqtā'* — and that would be from the point of view of their holders—was that the ownership of *waqf* was "mortmain (inalienable and irrevocable)". Moreover, its holder was generally "free of any kind of service, above all, military service" to the State.

The *waqf* grants also did not bring forth anything that seemed new for India. Its *rājās* had, "for centuries" and "not infrequently", granted to "one or another temple hundreds or thousands of new villages (settlements)". Because of these reasons and for those stated above, Kovalevsky's claim that the allodial property of the religious, charitable and generally useful institutions was turned into a feudal tenure in Mughal India was not acceptable to Marx. It may be added, incidentally, that one of the "Asiatic" countries in which the wealth and estate of the religious domain became on occasions a really mortal threat to the political authority was Burma. But even there, as Michael Aung-Thwin[119] despite disputations has convincingly shown, there grew up over time a built-in element in the system—the monarchy's right to execute from time to time the *śāsana* (i.e. religious purification) reform—by which the Buddhist *saṅgha* could

be occasionally cut to size, its wealth and land confiscated and its landlord rights curtailed.

Marx agreed with Kovalevsky however that while the major object of Muslim law in encouraging the rulers to distribute freely the so-called waste and uncultivated land was an increase of the State's income, the same consideration had also shaped the earlier Indian custom, according to which the kin and village community or its headman would transfer a plot of the waste land as the property of one who had first brought it under the plough and now paid an assessment due on it, a practice fully pursued by the *rājās* of the pre-Muslim period.

His review of Kovalevsky's account of the actual activities of the Muslim regimes in India, from the Arab conquest of Sind early in the eighth century down to the end of the Mughal rule, also convinced Marx that these by no means marked a significant break with those of the preceding Indian regimes, due note being taken of the empirical differences. As under the Delhi Sulṭanat, so under the Mughal Empire, there were very few essential changes in the land relations of the country. The assignment of *jāgīrs* and *iqtā's* for military services or of *zamīndārīs* for tax-collection and police services under the Mughals did not alter either the character of the service State or the essentials of the land relations at the base. The *nom générique* of "zamindar" was merely an abbreviation for the "collectors of public revenue". Local organs of the State, the *zamīndārs* were stationed "in between" the government at the centre and the village communities at the base. Moreover the *zamīndārī* system was not equally developed everywhere; only in Bengal was it very strong. Like their predecessors of the Delhi Sulṭanat and of ancient India, the Mughal rulers continued the traditional practice of assigning plots from the waste and domanial land to religious, educational and welfare institutions.

Marx was fully aware, though, that during the declining phase of the Mughal rule, as in certain earlier periods when the central government was in weak hands, as it often was, the government officials and agents who held conditional estates in lieu of service pay would try to usurp these holdings. And this, despite the fact that there were very few juridical changes in the land relations. So Marx observed that these usurpations were "partly forced" and "partly evoked by the nature of things". Thus in certain parts of India there came into being during the late Mughal rule an entire hierarchy of hereditary tax-farmers—the *zamīndārs, tālukdārs, patnīdārs, darpatnīdārs, sepatnīdārs* etc.—who possibly attained *de facto* landlord rights. It was however the rulers themselves who were at least partly responsible for these developments. These rulers did not care much for the mode of tenure so long as the annual land-tax was handed them. This tax was

> *a certain fixed sum*, considered as the annual produce of the district over its own exigencies. All that the zamindar made over and above belonged to himself; (he) therefore grinds down the ryots.

Considering all aspects of the matter, Marx seems to have only partly agreed with Kovalevsky that it was towards the end of the Mughal rule that the "so-called feudalization" could be seen in this or that locality. In most parts of the country, on the other hand, the occupants of the land continued with their possessions as before, while the administration of the State's functions remained in the hands of officials and agents named by the government.[120] However, despite Marx's awareness of the existence here and there in pre-colonial India of the mode of surplus extraction in the form of *rent* by means of the *de facto* exercise of landlord rights, he arrived at the position that throughout the history of pre-colonial India the land-*tax* drawn by the State with the help of its service officials and agents not merely amounted to "a prodigious share" of the country's agrarian surplus but also constituted the most crucial form of its appropriation. If that was so, the State was then receiving what in other circumstances would have been drawn by the landlords as rent. So Marx observed that in India the State was both the *landowner* and the *landlord*, and its land-*tax* was land-*rent*. Hence Marx's recognition of the "juridical fiction" involved in the State's proprietorship of the land "concentrated on a national scale" in pre-colonial India[121] and its appropriation of the major bulk of the agrarian surplus extracted in the form of tax/rent by its service agents and officials!

Theoretically, then, the State in India and, by extension, in other social formations under the predominance of the AMP was some kind of a service State, under which various functional groups, moulded by the kind of service they provided, constituted along with the king and his entourage the ruling strata of the country; and it was they who appropriated the lion's share of the social surplus. These ruling groups included the holders of "benefices" and other magnates who had to render military service to the government, and other officials and holders of estates who had to collect taxes and other dues and maintain peace in the localities assigned to them. In such a service State of the AMP, as Marian Sawer well puts it,

> whether or not the functional elite ... succeeded in converting their estates into unconditional holdings, they remained a class dependent on the favour of the State and moulded by this dependence.[122]

In other words, the government-named ruling elites "owned" their conditional holdings *in precarium*, the holdings that they received in lieu of service pay.

To be sure, it was the political power of the State, more than anything else, which determined as well as sustained its right to appropriate almost the entire or at least the lion's share of the country's surplus, drawn as tax chiefly from the agrarian, village community sector. Thus would the State look like a national landlord, making the land-tax converge with the land-rent. The appropriated surplus sustained a whole set of officials, functionaries and intermediaries of the service State, without whose service and cooperation the agrarian surplus could not have been extracted. As the State had no direct and institutional control over the management of the peasant household production, the only way it could

extract the surplus from the direct producers was by means of political power, by force, not merely physical force, which was important of course, but also by the force of custom and tradition. Based upon the claim of "eminent dominion" and the fiction of juridical formalism, the rights of the State in the AMP to draw tax/rent, and the entire socio-cultural order nurturing these rights, were ultimately sanctioned as law, supported by customs and sustained by the ideological frills of the country's hegemonic culture, nursed by the ruling groups and their priestly claque![123]

It's this insight into the working of the AMP that made Marx reluctant to endorse Kovalevsky's attempt to describe Mughal India as "feudal", even though Kovalevsky himself thought that the process of "feudalization" in India, compared with what was seen in the medieval West, was much less marked.[124] First, the assignments of such conditional holdings as the *iqtā's* or *jāgīrs* as well as the *zamīndārīs* did not, Marx showed, entail any feudal relationships; these merely meant that the land-tax was not directly routed to the State treasury but went to the holders of these estates as service agents of the government. And if the *khirāj* or land-tax had converted the landed property into some kind of feudal property, then the *impôt foncier* or French land-tax must have turned contemporary France into a feudal formation. Secondly, the farming out of offices made India as little feudal as the sale of offices had made ancient Rome so. Moreover, the practice of farming out the offices was not found everywhere in India, as Kovalevsky himself recognized. In the third place, serfdom which for Marx constituted a characteristic moment of the FMP was noticeably absent in India. Fourthly, the principle of *nülle terre sans maitre*, "no land without a lord", never prevailed in India. Here, land—if it was alienable—could be made over to anyone; but this was unthinkable in Romano-Germanic feudalism (cf. Maurer). There you found a certain "poetry of the soil" (*Bodenpoesie*) which made the land too "noble" and too exclusive to be alienated to the common people who worked it.

In this connection Marx also referred to Palgrave's definition of feudal law, which underlined the rights of both the free and unfree peasants to the lord's protection. In India no such rights existed; only the peasants under a *waqf* or religious holding could at most expect some protection under the wardenship of the concerned temple or mosque. Marx then pointed out that Kovalevsky himself had noticed a crucial difference between medieval India and feudal Europe in the sphere of "patrimonial jurisdiction" in civil law. In the latter the superior lord had no authority to enter the jurisdictional domain of his vassal. Not so was the case in pre-colonial India, where the State never parted with its ultimate power to try the land cases. Finally, "a great source" of feudalism was lost to India in that political office here was "not subject to divisions among the sons".[125]

It may be argued however that Marx's critique of Kovalevsky's "feudal-India" thesis merely showed that Mughal India was unlike Feudal Europe, which no-one can possibly dispute. But Marx's critique, it may also be said, did not prove that Mughal India had not turned feudal. Serfdom was of course by and

large absent in India; but serfdom as such is not a necessary criterion in defining the FMP. I may however point out in connection with such contentions that Marx, for one thing, was not called on here to provide a sufficient or even essential definition of the FMP; his critique was confined merely to some of the points implicitly or explicitly raised in Kovalevsky's view of feudalism *vis-a-vis* India. (Even then, it is unmistakbly clear that Marx did not wish to define a pre-capitalist mode of production like the FMP exclusively in terms of its *economic* mechanism, which in fact requires various extra-and non-economic moments for its very functioning).[126] For another thing, although Wickham[127] is right in suggesting that the surplus was appropriated in the form of rent in the FMP and in the form of tax in the AMP, it is necessary to clarify how these appropriations were made possible in theoretical terms. In the AMP the direct extraction of the surplus or the fruits of surplus from a peasantry in *de facto* possession of the land by a distant ruling group in control of the State apparatus could take place in an objective situation in which the rights of the State, founded upon the principle of "eminent dominion" and the "juridical fiction" of the State's supreme landlordship, had become a structural presence. To be sure, the rent form of surplus appropriation in the case of the FMP was made possible by the generalization of the rights of lordship founded upon the nobility's legal monopolization of the land. To be equally sure, in both cases it was the politico-legal and even ideological coercion which overdetermined the extraction of the surplus; but the different ways in which such extra-and non-economic moments intervened in the sphere of the economic infrastructure require to be adequately theorized.

As I have suggested earlier, in the AMP there might have been occasional overlaps of the rent and tax forms of surplus extraction, the lordly rent-extraction never overdetermining the situation however. There always remained here, though, the snares of an overmighty political regime, without a sturdy base in civil society. The institutional guarantee of the extraction of the surplus being provided by an essentially politico-ideological arrangement and not by any economic hegemony in the production process, there always remained in the AMP a distinct possibility of some sporadic usurpations of the rights of appropriation of the State's land-tax and its transformation into feudal-like rent by its mighty officials and agents via their claims of prescriptive rights over the holdings assigned them for tax-collection. After all, it was a purely mundane relationship that united the State with its high-and-mighty officials as with ropes of sand.

Thus, with all these built-in weaknesses and structural constraints, the so-called "despotic" State of the AMP represented in actuality what Marx described as "a *fluid* Asiatic despotism",[128] indeed much more "fluid" than the commonly-imagined and inherited version of a macabre "oriental despotism". Indeed, it seems that for Marx the State's "despotism" in the AMP consisted mainly of its "ruthlessness" in wringing taxes from the peasant producers, "frequently by means of torture",[129] and nothing much besides. Once the tax-collection had been made, the mighty State of the AMP would function and

move in an essentially soft, even unconcerned, style. As Habib has also argued, the so-called "oriental despotism" for Marx was no more awesome than a mere "rent-receiving sovereignty"; it

> stands practically divested of the other political features assigned to it in European liberal thought such as arbitrary and absolute monarchy.[130]

Indeed, there is no acceptable warrant in the Marxian argument on the AMP for postulating in the manner of Karl Wittfogel an all-pervading "oriental despotism" founded upon its agro-managerial function. No-one would deny however that all along his life Marx maintained that "works of public utility"—irrigation projects, road constructions or whatever—were "more indispensable in Asiatic countries than anywhere else".[131] But these works were not, could not have been, an exclusive concern of the central government only. I have already referred to late Marx's emphasis upon the role of the village community in improving "the productivity of the soil" by irrigational measures, among others. This explains why Marx did not pursue one of his earlier assertions, advanced rather artificially[132] in 1853, when he said that in view of the territorial vastness and the undeveloped material culture in the orient, it was not possible for the local (and regional) institutions to organize irrigation projects, which task hence became an exclusive business of the central government.[133] As I have argued earlier, it's only the large-scale constructions of public utility which might have come to "appear" as the work of the "despotic" regime hanging above,[134] and which constituted no more than only "*one* of the material bases" of despotic power.[135]

Likewise, the argument that the village isolationism of the AMP, of which Marx spoke on several occasions, creating as it did a sea of disconnected atoms over which it was easy for the State to spread its despotic tentacles, should not be over-emphasized. In 1857 Marx added one qualification to the formulation when he stated that it was only "in the *original*, self-sustaining communes of Asia" that the lack of need for roads on the one side and the actual lack of them on the other locked the villages into "their closed-off isolation".[136] Another qualification was introduced in 1881 when Marx asserted that although the isolation of the rural communities and the lack of contact between them, originally imposed by the vast expanse of a country like Russia, might have constituted the natural basis of a central despotism, this was *not* an "immanent characteristic" of the archaic communities.[137]

As I have argued earlier, the grass-roots economy of the AMP was structurally out of bounds for the State; and objectively speaking, it was not generally possible for the State to act in an interventionist style. No wonder then that Marx himself would point out that

> the oriental despotism attacks municipal self-government only when opposed to its direct interests, but is very glad to allow these institutions to continue so long as they take off its shoulders the duty of doing something and spare it the trouble of regular administration.[138]

Needless to say, there cannot be any two opinions about the implication of this statement, that the "oriental" State was least interested in busying itself with the burden of local administration if the village communities (and the government officials) discharged their administrative duties and duly sent the tax to the State treasury. The State in the AMP, to repeat, was interested primarily in its tax-income; it was seldom concerned with any systematic and non-random economic-developmental work. It is hence difficult to go by Marian Sawer's view[139] that the "oriental" State was itself a constituent of the AMP's economic infrastructure, although of course she finds[140] in Marx's account what she calls "an exaggerated view" of the State's role in providing the conditions of production.

This "exaggerated view" however consisted merely of Marx's showing that the government in the AMP, the Mughal regime in India for example, would now and then give money advances to peasants[141] or promote such things as "canalization etc.".[142] Witness that these and other like measures, which might have helped increase production and extend the cultivable and hence taxable area, were primarily intended to extract more and more taxes, a point made repeatedly by both Kovalevsky and Marx.

Its primary interest being confined to tax-taking, the State in the AMP would then normally leave the numerous little communities at the base to their tiny world of freedom, once the annual tax had been wrung from them. Unsurprisingly enough, the State here generally desisted from interfering with the traditional "civil rules" made up of customs and usages that were employed in the administration of families, castes, village communities etc. at the base; even such a powerful monarch of the early 19th century as Ranjit Singh never thought of "changing the civil rules under which his subjects lived".[143] It goes without saying, though, that as the State controlled the country's major apparatus of coercion in its royal army, it could always try, in times of contingent needs, to extract wealth, goods and labour services by sheer force, by increasing what Marx called *absolute* surplus labour/product. Recall, for example, Marx's reference[144] to the ancient Asiatic, Egyptian and other States spreading by force their "command over the hands and arms of almost the entire non-agricultural population" for the purpose of constructing gigantic structures of magnificence and of public utility!

The role of the State in the Marxian view of the AMP as the principal extractor of the surplus chiefly by means of extra-economic coercion, by the exercise of politico-ideological power, has often been regarded as highly problematical. For, such a conception of the State is said to have resulted in the idea of a free-floating entity, the State, without a *class* base, which would surely do violence to Marx's general notion of the State as an instrument of class domination.[145] This is not the place to examine the complexities of the Marxian view of the State in general; but it may be noted in passing that the State for Marx is not a simple weapon of the ruling class. It is also something more. In fact, it represents a dialectical interaction of its three interrelated roles—the instrumentalist (i.e., the State as an instrument of the ruling class); the struc-

turalist (i.e., the State as an objective-structural expression of the existing social formation); and the ideal-critical (i.e., the State as reflecting a perpetual tension between the *idea* of the State as representing the society's universal interests and its *actuality* in class societies as representing the sectional interests of the ruling class).[146]

It is not hence necessary I think to "resolve" the aforementioned problem of the State in the AMP by throwing away the baby, as it were, along with the bath-water, by asserting, that is, in the manner of George Lichtheim that Marx and Engels must have deciphered a bureaucratic-administrative origin of the class system in "Asiatic" societies in view of the fact that the State and its officials appropriated the surplus here.[147] It is also not necessary I believe to "rescue" Marx, so to speak, by insisting that his criticism of Henry Sumner Maine's view of the State[148] reveals Marx's "dissatisfaction with his own formulation in the *Grundrisse* on the nature of the oriental State".[149] As a matter of fact, late in his life while taking excerpt notes from Maine's *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (1875) Marx took Maine to task not for the latter's criticism of the Austinian conception of the State as a piece of speculative abstraction—the conception that "the Sovereign person or group actually wields the stored-up force of society by an uncontrolled exercise of will"—but for Maine's uncritical and naive assertion that the State' control of the forces of society is shaped by a "vast mass of influences, which we may call for shortness moral". For Marx these "influences" are "economical before anything else"; Maine had thus failed to grasp "the much deeper point" that

> the seemingly supreme independent existence of the State is itself only seeming and that it is in all its forms and excrescence of society,

reflecting the objective contradiction of class interests.[150] I may hardly add however that the relationship between the State and civil society cannot have been for Marx an unmediated relationship, as if it reflects a simple contrariety of *real* opposities. The relationship between the State and civil society, which conditions the character of the State at a particular stage of social development, signifies a dialectical contradiction between *essential* opposites and would hence depend upon the actual mediation by the classes existing in society. A weak civil society, with undeveloped class formations, may then endow the State and those who control it with the appearance of an overmighty structural position.

And in Marx's view of the AMP the State appears I think to have been an "overdeveloped" entity, that is, in relation to an undeveloped civil society. The community-oriented milieu of peasant household production in which the producers had a direct, market-independent access to their means of subsistence and means of production; the general self-sufficiency of the village communities at the base, with a thin connection with the outside non-agricultural sector based upon a different division of labour in the country as a whole; the lingering persuasions of such collectivities as caste, kinship, religion etc.; and the distant political superstructure built by force and supported by ideology—these and

other related features of the AMP, unsurprisingly enough, ensured the absence of a developed civil society beholden to the model of the ideal *homo oeconomicus*. Observe in this connection Marx's showing that full-grown class formations were possible only in the age in which the *homo oeconomicus* would emerge in society in all its grandeur, in the epoch of the CMP. In all the PCMPs, class relationships were bound to remain unarticulated and even mixed-up in the tangle of various non-class but stratified forms of inter-human relationships in society.

The relative autonomy of the "overdeveloped" State of the AMP was thus a reflection of a weak civil society with undeveloped class formations. I may recall here how young Marx, in tackling the Hegelian concept of bureaucracy as the "universal class", showed in 1843 the possible historical conditions in which bureaucratic domination would be quite a possibility—conditions in which the absence of a strong civil society and the absence of a hegemonic class would ensure a kind of bureaucratization of the State, which would be prone to acquiring an autonomous status superimposed from above.[151] In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels showed that

> the impotence of each separate sphere of life (one can speak here neither of estates nor of classes, but at most of former estates and classes not yet born) did not allow any one of them to gain exclusive domination.

Marx and Engels were speaking here of early modern Germany and of the stalemate in its unformed class relations. The "inevitable consequence" of such a situation, they said, was that the special sphere responsible for the administraion of public interests

> acquired an abnormal independence, which became still greater in the bureaucracy of modern times. Thus the State built itself up into an apparently independent force; and this position, which in other countries was only transitory—a transitional stage—it has maintained in Germany until the present day.[152]

Marx would thus allow a long term sway of an "overdeveloped" State in the societal conditions of unclarified or of course unformed class relations.[153] In a weak civil society, as in that of the AMP, still under the persuasion of various onymous, natural, communal and other extra-economic bonds, it was but natural that the State would assume an apparently overdeveloped stature, just as politics would maintain its domineering presence in the PCMPs of the West.

It's in relation to these PCMPs of Europe that I wish to make a final point on the pace of change in the AMP. Common is the popular Marxist notion that while the former represented a *dynamic* West over which was writ large a programmed history with its dueful structural changes from the WAMP to the FMP to the CMP, the AMP of the orient stood for a *static* East, the *semper idem*, which not even moved at a caterpillar pace. I have at least two objections to such facile theory-making. First, while it is the CMP which is the *first* mode of production in history to have opened up, out of its own economic logic, the

socialist *potentia*, the possibility of its structural leap to a higher order of society, no-one has been so far able to demonstrate convincingly that the WAMP created a kind of economic forces and relations of production which led irresistibly to the FMP or that the FMP in like inevitable manner led to the CMP. With our historical hindsight, we often tend to regard the subsequent as the consequent. All Marx's statements about these two transformations in Europe appear to have been more of an historical than logical nature.

Secondly, although Marx himself was at least partly responsible for promoting the view of the AMP's *unchanging* character, of which he spoke on quite a few occasions, his contrasting reference in all these cases was the fast-moving pace of change in the CMP and not, as was epistemologically called for, the slow pace of change in its companion forms of economy, the pre-capitalist economies of Europe. As I have argued elsewhere,[154] in all the PCMPs including the AMP, the major "economic aim"—"the main point here", in Marx's own reckoning—was the production of use-value.[155] Production of use-value tends to leave its patina over the entire economic system and is not apt, to be sure, to induce radical structural changes. That was why all the PCMPs, including those of Europe, represented for Marx stable, although not static, societies. Of them, of course, the social formation founded upon the "Asiatic" village community would hang on "most tenaciously and for the longest time".[156] The difference however is only quantitative, and no more. In all the PCMPs, thus, long term stability was the norm and structural change the exception; the latter here was not something immanent and would be the product of historical factors. The so-called "changelessness" of the AMP and not of the other PCMPs, then, can only be accepted very like a whale!

References

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1. Thus, two eminent Marxist historians of India, one of whom rejects the notion of "feudalism" as inappropriate to much of medieval Indian history and the other refuses to apply it to any phase of the history of pre-colonial India, are not ready to frame either an alternative analytical/theoretical perspective or a modified version of the paradigm. The former clings to such a plainly pragmatic and descriptive category as that of "the medieval Indian system" [see Irfan Habib, "Classifying Pre-colonial India", in T.J. Byres and H. Mukhia, eds, *Feudalism and Non- European Societies*, London, 1985, p. 49] and the latter speaks only of "a wide range of [pre-capitalist] social formations" without characterizing them [see Harbans Mukhia, "Was there Feudalism in India?", *Journal of Peasant Studies*, VIII, no. 3, 1981, p. 293].
2. Cf. Aidan Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy", *New Left Review*. no. 107, 1978.
3. Perry Anderson, "Introduction to Glucksmann", *New Left Review*, no. 72, 1972, p. 63n.

4. Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production*, London, 1975, pp. 178ff.
5. Shlomo Avineri, "Introduction", in *MCM*, pp. 10ff.
6. See, for example, Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London, 1974, especially pp. 484ff; Bipan Chandra, "Karl Marx, His Theories of Asian Societies, and Colonial Rule", *Review*, 5, 13-91; and a host of others.
7. Sudipta Kaviraj, "On the Status of Marx's Writings on India", *Social Scientist*, no. 124, 1983, pp. 26-46.
8. Heinz Lubasz, "Marx's Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production: A Genetic Analysis", in Diptendra Banerjee, ed., *Marxian Theory and the Third World*, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 108ff.
9. Cf. Sudipta Kaviraj, "On the Status of Marx's Writings on India", (Mimeographed draft-paper presented to the Seminar on "Karl Marx and the Analysis of Indian Society" held in New Delhi in 1983 under the auspices of Indian School of Social Sciences).
10. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (edited by Q. Hoare and G.N. Smith, New York, 1971), pp. 382ff; cf. Diptendra Banerjee, "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", in Banerjee, ed., op. cit., p. 139.
11. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*,. Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 461; and *MESC*, p.104.
12. Diptendra Banerjee, "On Marxian Problematic and Methodology", *Society and Change*, II, no. 3, 1981; *idem*, "On Marx's Conceptualization of Pre-capitalist Modes of Production", *Society and Change*, III, no. 3, 1983; *idem*, "In Search of a Theory of Pre-capitalist Modes of Production", in Banerjee, ed., op. cit. All necessary references to Marx's writings may be found in these essays.
13. Georg Lukács, "The Changing Function of Historical Materialism" (1919), in *History and Class Consciousness*, London, 1971, pp. 238f.
14. *Grundrisse*, p. 817.
15. This refers to Marx's "The British Rule in India", *NYDT*, 25 June 1853, *MCM*, pp. 88ff. On his own admission, he was carrying here a hidden battle against the American economist Henry Charles Carey (see *MESC*, pp. 83ff); and he appears to have deliberately blown up out of all proportion the so-called vegetative life of the Indians, leading to a total stagnation in Indian society (cf. Banerjee, "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", in Banerjee, ed., op. cit., 137f). Heinz Lubasz (op. cit., 121f) even accuses Marx of suppressing in this essay the information that he already had come to know about the part played by local and provincial authorities in providing artificial irrigation in "Asiatic" countries.
16. Cf. Diptendra Banerjee. "Marx, Kovalevsky and Pre-colonial India", *Social Science Probings*, III, no. 3, 1986, pp. 360-65.
17. "Introduction", *Grundrisse*, pp. 106f.
18. Karl Marx, "Drafts of a Reply", in Teodor Shanin, ed., *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, London, 1984, p. 112.
19. *TVS*, I, p. 409.
20. Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale*, I, New York and London, 1974, pp. 139f; and *Unequal Development*, Hassocks, 1976, pp. 13ff.
21. Chris Wickham, "The Uniqueness of the East", in Byres and Mukhia, eds, op. cit., p. 170.
22. A fuller account of some of my arguments and the relevant references may be found in my articles, already cited, "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", and "Marx, Kovalevsky and Pre-colonial India".
23. To draw out Marx's views on the matters raised by Maxim Kovalevsky, I have tried to compare the former's critical excerpt notes from Kovalevsky, *MEMMK* in Lawrence Krader, *The Asiatic Mode of Production*, Assen, 1975, part 2 and the latter's 1879 book on communal possession in English translation [Surender J. Patel and Leigh Lisker, tr, *Communal Landholding* (being English translation of Chapters 3-7 of Kovalevsky's book in manuscript)]. I am grateful to Barun De and late Daniel Thorner for procuring for me

many years ago the typescript of this translation made by Patel and Lisker under a support from the University of Pennsylvania.

24. Cf. Roman Rosdolsky, *The Making of Marx's 'Capital'*, London, 1977, p. 273n; Lubasz, op. cit., pp. 107-31.
25. *Grundrisse*, p. 882; many other references.
26. Cf. Banerjee, "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", op. cit., pp. 142-45.
27. "Drafts of a Reply", p. 108.
28. Ibid., p. 103; cf. p. 107n.
29. Patel and Lisker, tr., op. cit.; *MEMMK*, pp. 346-67; cf. Banerjee, "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", op. cit., pp. 142-70; and "Marx, Kovalevsky and Pre-colonial India", op. cit., pp. 323- 37.
30. Patel and Lisker, tr., op. cit.; and *MEMMK*, pp. 368-84.
31. "Drafts of a Reply", pp. 104 and 109.
32. *MEMMK*, p. 355.
33. Ibid., p. 346.
34. Ibid., pp. 355f.
35. "Trade with China", *NYDT*, 3 December 1859, *MCM*, p. 398.
36. *Capital*, III, Moscow, 1966, p. 616n.
37. *MPP*, p. 134.
38. *MEMMK*, p. 346.
39. Ibid., p. 356.
40. *MEHSM*, in Lawrence Krader, ed., *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, Assen, 1974, p. 335.
41. *MPP*, p. 134.
42. Stephen P. Dunn, *The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production*, London, 1982, pp. 93f.
43. Marx like Henry Sumner Maine saw that in pre-modern times, speaking generally, land was a "drug" and was a very cheap commodity; the real problem was not to obtain land but the means of cultivating it (cf. *MEHSM*, pp. 296, 297 and 301).
44. Banerjee, "Marx, Kovalevsky and Pre-colonial India", op. cit., p. 371.
45. Svein Aass, "The Relevance of Chayanov's Macro Theory to the Case of Java", in E.J. Hobsbawm et al., eds, *Peasants in History: Essays in Honour of Daniel Thorner*, Calcutta, 1980, p. 229.
46. *MEHSM*, pp. 292, 306-10, 358, 361. Cf. *MEMMK*, and cf. Banerjee, "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", op. cit., pp. 167f.
47. *MESC*, p. 217.
48. *MEMMK*, pp. 359f.
49. Ibid., pp. 357f.
50. Ibid., pp. 350 and 355.
51. *Grundrisse*, p. 465.
52. *MEMMK*, pp. 381ff.
53. Ibid., p. 399.
54. Cf. *Capital*, I, Moscow, 1965, pp. 357f and 340.
55. Ibid., p. 358.
56. *Grundrisse*, p. 891.
57. *MEMMK*, pp. 366f.
58. *MEHSM*, pp. 326f.
59. *MEMMK*, pp. 355 and 397.
60. Ibid., pp. 390-94.
61. Ibid., pp. 388f.
62. Ibid., p. 393.
63. See for an impression of the continuing debate over "moral economy" versus "political economy", among others, James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, New Haven, 1976; Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant* Berkeley, 1979; Michael Adas, "Moral Economy' or 'Contest State'?: Elite Demands and the Origins of Peasant Protest in Southeast Asia", *Journal of Social History*, 13(4), 1980; *idem*, "Peasant Strategies in Asian Societies: Moral and Economic Approaches, A Symposium", *Journal of Asian Studies* XLII, no. 4, 1983; Andrew B. Chovanes, "On Vietnamese and Other Peasants", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, no. 17(2), 1986; and James C. Scott and Benedict J.Tria Kerkvliet, eds, *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance in South-East Asia*, London, 1986. See also the excellent review-article by Michael Aung-Thwin, "Toungoo and Burma in Southeast Asian Studies", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, no. 16(1), 1985.
64. Thus Marx noted in Kovalevsky's account a typical description of the so-called common "appurtenances" called *sayer* in the Northwest Provinces of India, which included: "(a) *uncultivated land* rich in grass, brush or woods; (b) artificial or natural water reserves, as

springs and swamps which can be turned to irrigation; (c) coppices and gardens with fruit trees and firewood; (d) *house-sites* which are not occupied by the members, from which they draw certain rents from the houses and out-houses erected on them; (e) desert land containing *saltpeter and iron*, whose exploitation is the occupation of the community members themselves or of alien lessees; (f) finally, *revenues from fairs and payments from people* who settle in the community and work at one craft or another" (*MEMMK*, p. 354).

65. *Grundrisse*, pp. 473f; *MEMMK*, p. 353; cf. R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, "The Analysis of Pre-colonial Social Formations in Asia in the Writings of Karl Marx", IHR, II(2), 1976, pp. 381 and 385.
66. *Grundrisse*, p. 474; cf. *Capital*, I, p. 514n; cf. Gunawardana, op. cit., pp. 381 and 385.
67. Cf. Marx's statement on the Russian and Indian communities "which had to sell a portion of their produce, and a constantly increasing one at that, for the purpose of obtaining money for taxes wrung from them—frequently by means of torture—by a ruthless and despotic State. These products were sold without regard to price of production, they were sold at the price which the dealer offered, because the peasant perforce needed money without fail when taxes became due" (*Capital*, III, p. 726).
68. Marx himself spoke of "the production of the means of subsistence, on the one hand, by the fertility of the natural agents, such as land; on the other hand, by the limited requirements of the population, due to climate etc—this is, for instance, the case in India" (*TVS*, II, p. 407). Cf. his statement about the "extremely small requirements" of Indian labourers, who for their part were equally crushed down by their own "miserable needs" (ibid., p. 16). Marx's excerpt notes from John Budd Phear also depicted the very modest needs of the village folk in nineteenth-century Bengal (see Karl Marx, "Excerpts from John Budd Phear, The Aryan Village" in Lawrence Krader, ed., op. cit., pp. 245ff). However, one would overlook only at his peril Marx's essential argument that the determination of man's needs and wants by natural conditions can have meaning only in a very general sense (*Capital*, I, pp. 512ff; cf. pp. 514f).
69. Cf. Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique on Neo-Smithian Marxism", *New Left Review*, no. 104, 1977, 31ff; cf. Banerjee, "In Search of a Theory of Pre-capitalist Modes of Production", op.cit., p. 33; and "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", op. cit., p. 135.
70. Diptendra Banerjee, "The Historical Problematic of Third World Development", *Social Scientist*, nos. 171-72, 1987, pp. 18f; and "Marx, Kovalevsky and Precolonial India", op. cit., p. 374.
71. *MEJBP*, p. 284. 72. *Capital*, I, p. 217; III, p. 791.
73. Irfan Habib, "Marx's Perception of India", *The Marxist*, I(1), 102; cf. Sawer, op. cit., p. 144.
74. *MEMMK*, p. 358.
75. Recall that Marx quoted Richard Jones to show "the simple wants and tastes" of the village cultivators, some of which were met either by village handicraftsmen or by roving artisans in India. Unlike the village craftsmen however the town artisans were not confined to any location (*TSV*, III, p. 435), presumably because the non-rural artisan craft was based upon a different kind of division of labour.
76. Numerous references; see e.g., *Grundrisse*, pp. 740 and 882; *Capital*, I, pp. 87 and 351; III, pp. 177 and 317.
77. *Capital*, I, p. 357. This passage has still not received the attention it deserves; see however Krader, op. cit., pp.121ff; and Habib, "Marx's Perception of India", op. cit., pp. 106ff.
78. Numerous references; see e.g., *Grundrisse*, pp. 108, 223, 253 and 858; *Capital*, I, p. 79; III, pp. 328 and 330.
79. *Grundrisse*, p. 525.
80. See for references Ashin Das Gupta, "Indian Merchants and the Western Indian Ocean: The Early Seventeenth Century", *Modern Asian Studies*, XIX(3), 1985, p. 483n.

81. In *Capital* Marx showed: "It is the surplus (of the village community) alone that becomes a commodity, and a part of that surplus cannot become a commodity until it has reached the hands of the State, because from time immemorial a certian quantity of the community's production has found its way to the State as rent in kind" (*Capital*, I, p. 357). I need hardly add that the "rent in kind" mentioned here would not naturally be an invariant, especially in the case of the developed form of the community; and Marx's review of Kovalevsky's work amply demonstrates the presence in rural India of other kinds of rent (or tax) as well, e.g., in money and labour services. Recall also how according to Marx (see *supra*, note 67) the peasants had to undersell their products to raise *cash* for tax-payments.
82. *Capital*, I, p. 598.
83. See for a reference to State enterprises in Russia on the basis of self labour *Capital*, II, Moscow, 1967, p. 113.
84. *Capital*, I, pp. 339f. I may also hazard that it was because of the same reason—"the perpetuation of and inversion in a single-minded activity generation after generation"—that even India's one of the very developed art-forms, its classical music, based upon the *gharānā* system with its guild-like exclusiveness and its secret-society mentality, could achieve an astonishing flowering of musical skills and techniques over time (cf. Jayasri Banerjee, "The Methodology of Teaching Indian Classical Music", *Sangeet Natak*, no. 79, 1986, 16).
85. *MEMMK*, p. 360. 86. *TVS*, III, pp. 433f; cf. *Capital*, I, p. 340.
87. In the passage referred to here, Marx (*TVS*, I, p. 277) said that in such countries "the principal revenue" was "in the hands of landlords, princes etc., in the form of rent". However, the statement is to be considered in the context of Marx's clear-cut position on the minor role of rent-extracting landlordism in the AMP, as is shown below.
88. *TVS*, I, p. 277. 89. *TVS*, III, p. 420.
90. *Capital*, III, 330f; cf. *Grundrisse*, p. 859.
91. *Capital*, III, pp. 330f; cf. *TVS*, III, pp. 431 and 444.
92. *TVS*, III, p. 435. 93. *Grundrisse*, p. 474. 94. Ibid., p. 479; cf. p. 494.
95. Ibid., p. 859. 96. *Capital*, I, p. 340. 97. *TVS*, I, p. 277.
98. *Capital*, I, p. 597; and *TVS*, III, p. 531.
99. Ibid., p. 420; and *Capital*, I, p. 598. 100. Ibid., p. 131.
101. *Capital*, I, p. 598. 102. Habib, "Marx's Perception of India", op. cit., pp. 107f.
103. *Capital*, III, p. 786. 104. Cf. *Capital*, I, p. 357. 105. *Capital*, III, p. 334.
106. Cf. Habib, "Marx's Perception of India", op. cit., p. 116.
107. Cf. Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale*, p. 140. 108. *MEMMK*, pp. 362f.
109. Ibid., p. 358. 110. *Grundrisse*, pp. 472f.
111. Karl Marx, "Land Tenure in India", *NYDT*, 7 June 1858, in *MCM*, p. 313.
112. Karl Marx, "Plan for English Colonization in India", *NYDT*, 3 April 1858, in *MCM*, p. 278.
113. *Capital*, I, pp. 726f. 114. Krader, op. cit., p. 109n.
115. It must be admitted however that the king's "general authority over land was recognized by numerous epithets used for him in early medieval records" [R.S. Sharma, "How Feudal was Indian Feudalism?", in Byres and Mukhia, eds, op. cit., p. 26; and "From Gopati to Bhupati", *Studies in History*, II(2), 1980, p. 8n].
116. See Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1963, 112f; and "Marx's Perception of India", op. cit., p. 104n.
117. *MESC*, p. 86.
118. Habib, "Marx's Perception of India", op. cit., p. 105; cf. p. 114.
119. Michael Aung-Thwin, "The Role of *Sasana* Reform in Burmese History: Economic Dimensions of Religious Purification", *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXVIII(4), 1979.
120. *MEMMK*, pp. 374-84. 121. *Capital*, III, p. 791. 122. Sawer, op. cit., p. 151.
123. *Capital*, III, p. 793.

124. Patel and Lisker, tr., op. cit.; Daniel Thorner, "Feudalism in India" (1956), in *The Shaping of Modern India*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 288.
125. *MEMMK*, pp. 383f.
126. Cf. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, p. 407; Banerjee, "In Search of a Theory of Pre-capitalist Modes of Production", pp. 36f.
127. Wickham, op. cit. 128. Cf. Sawer, op. cit., p. 50.
129. Cf. *Capital*, III, p. 726. 130. Habib, "Marx's Perception of India", op. cit., p. 104.
131. Karl Marx, "Taxes in India", *NYDT*, 23 July 1858, in *MCM*, p. 335; and *Grundrisse*, p. 474.
132. Banerjee, "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", op. cit., pp. 137f.
133. *MCM*, p. 90. 134. *Grundrisse*, p. 474. 135. *Capital*, I, p. 514n.
136. *Grundrisse*, p. 525. 137. "Drafts of a Reply", p. 103.
138. Karl Marx, "Revolutionary Spain", *NYDT*, 9 September 1854, in Saul K. Padover, ed., *Karl Marx on Revolution* New York, 1971, p. 591.
139. Sawer, op. cit., pp. 52f. 140. Ibid., p. 54. 141. Cf. *MEMMK*, p. 380.
142. Ibid., p. 387; *Capital*, I, p. 514n. 143. *MEHSM*, p. 334.
144. *Capital*, I, pp. 333f. 145. See e.g., Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., pp. 196ff.
146. Cf. D.A. Gold, C.Y.H. Lo and E.O. Wright, "Recent Development in Marxist Theories of the Capitalist State", V and VI, 1975.
147. George Lichtheim, "Marx and the Asiatic Mode of Production", *St Anthony's Paper*, no. 16, 1963.
148. *MEHSM*, pp. 329f. 149. Gunawardana, op. cit., p. 387.
150. *MEHSM*, pp. 329f.
151. Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*, ed., J. O'Malley; Cambridge, 1970, pp. 43-48 and *passim*.
152. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 211f.
153. Cf. Banerjee, "The Historical Problematic of Third World Development", op. cit., p. 22.
154. Banerjee, "Marx and the 'Original' Form of India's Village Community", op. cit., pp. 134ff.
155. *Grundrisse*, pp. 475 and 485. 156. Ibid., p. 486.

20

A Note on the Modalities of Subordination of Indigenous Capital in Colonial India

SABYASACHI BHATTACHARYA

In this paper I propose to look at some aspects of the relationship between English and 'Native' businessmen in Bengal in the early decades of the nineteenth century. This I shall do on the basis of the private papers and business letters (numbering approximately ten thousand, of which only a fraction has been systematically examined) of John Palmer; the papers are now located in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Finally, I shall try to examine the general relevance of our data to the question, how was Indian capital forced into a 'comprador' role, or as I prefer to put it, subordinated? That leads us to the question of the validity of the 'Comprador/National Capital' paradigm.

A note on the source and an introduction to John Palmer may be useful. Palmer was possibly the richest European businessman in India in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. One can form an impression of his wealth from the fact that, according to the only surviving account-book, in a single year (1825-26) his household expense alone was Rs 70,000. In 1828 the assets of his firm were valued at Rs 1.53 crores.[1] He was the head of the Premier Agency House of Bengal and the Bodleian records relate to his business activities in the period 1808-35. The main series of papers consist of "out-letter books", and some letters received have also been preserved. Altogether the 59 volumes (MS Eng. lett. c. 67 to 125 and a few others) contain more than ten thousand business letters. In the absence of contemporary Indian business records the Palmer papers are highly valuable in investigating the relationship between British and Indian capital. The compilation of an index of all the Indian correspondents of Palmer and the construction of 'dossiers' of these 'native men of business' is the only way of building up a coherent picture of Indian capitalists' relations with this typical Agency House. This attempt has not been completed yet and we present here some tentative findings.

There are many documents in the Palmer collection which are interesting without being very significant. For instance, there are two letters addressed to Rammohan Roy[2] seeking his "auspicious mediation" in a dispute between Palmer and a friend of Rammohan, Kaleenath Ray, who was "protecting a worthless Fellow", a debt defaulter. "Your own honourable Principles are both a Gaurantee for your probing this matter to the quick, and for doing us a friendly service towards the recovery of our claims ..." (Rammohan's arbitration was accepted by both parties, the second letter indicates).[3] Or again, there are a very

large number of letters between Palmer and the merchant prince Dwarkanath Tagore. In the early letters to "Baboo Dwarkanath Thokore' the tone is cold and distant.[4] Towards the end of his business career, for Palmer he became 'Dear Dwarkanath'.[5] Instead of summons to Palmer's office for business,[6] 'Dwarka' receives invitations to make social calls: "I wish you would drop in occasionally".[7] The same Tagore, when Palmer is writing to an European confidante is "Dwarkie"—an obvious pun referring to "Darky's" colour.[8]

This kind of trivia, though significant trivia for the social historian, can be easily picked up in the Palmer papers. But instead of being tempted by that, let us pose some problems and see what new light the Palmer papers throw on them.

In an earlier paper[9] I have argued that indigenous capital was forced into what many have characterized as a comprador role by foreign capital with the aid of the colonial government. This process of subordination, it was argued, was the outcome of (a) the monopolistic power exercised by a section of private foreign capitalists in the market, and (b) the non-market pressures exerted by the government actuated by the drive to widen the base of British capital in India. With the increasing integration of India as a satellite in the world capitalist system, the subordinate role of indigenous merchant and moneylending capital became more well-defined. However, crises in the metropolitan economy (e.g., that of 1825) weakened foreign capitalists *vis-a-vis* indigenous capital and at these crises the former were supported by colonial government. This support came in the form of government loans; and where did that come from ? From the land revenue of Bengal of course. And thus the surplus extracted from agricultural sector was used by the colonial government to facilitate the subordination of indigenous capital (particularly at times when a crisis destablized the monopolistic Agency Houses and exposed them to the pressure of indigenous capitalists demanding more favourable terms). In my paper cited earlier I suggested that "the use of monopolistic power was inherent in the colonial situation, irrespective of the explicit monopoly of the East India Company, and the subordination of indigenous capital to the needs of foreign capital were not left to the interplay of market forces alone".

This interpretation differs from the received version in many ways. First, in several well-documented studies the emphasis has been on the triumph of Free Trade over the monopoly principle evinced in the gradual erosion of the monopolies of the East India Company culminating in the Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833. Secondly, the increasing preference of indigenous capital for petty moneylending, investment in 'company papers', urban real property, *zamīndarī*, etc. and the dissipation of wealth in conspicuous consumption as a cause of the disappearance of Bengali entrepreneurship have monopolized historians' attention, to the exclusion of the compulsions which brought about the 'compradorisation' or expulsion of indigenous capital in business. Thirdly, the extent to which indigenous capital was used in providing the circulating capital of the Agency Houses has been underestimated, so that Dwarkanath Tagore who entered the Agency business (as a partner) has been identified as the exceptional

case while the large volume of native capital participating in the Agency business (as loan capital) has escaped attention.

First, as regards the 'monopolistic power' exercised by the Agency Houses our evidence is, in my view, quite conclusive. The number of Agency Houses was large: 29 in 1803, 20 in 1811, 24 in 1818, and 27 in 1828.[10] But there was high concentration of business in a few hands. Out of 28 houses according to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, 6 accounted for "the principal part of the trade of Calcutta, at least in the important article of indigo".[11] In 1829-30 these 6 houses handled 74 per cent of indigo. In 1830, the top 6 owned or managed 65 per cent of the vessels belonging to the port of Calcutta, all the big dockyards, and the only textile mill and collieries in Bengal.[12] Within this oligopoly the bigger ones further strengthened themselves by taking a larger share of the government loans than others. Alexander & Co. obtained about 20 per cent and Palmer & Co. about 40 per cent of all the funds lent by the goverment to all the Agency Houses in Bengal.[13] Governor-General Bentinck pointed out that the Agency Houses had "with aid of the restrictive system as complete a monopoly of the floating money of the country as that possessed of the revenues by the East India Company itself".[14] Although C.H. Philips has not drawn this conclusion his data suggest that apart from monopoly in the economic sense, the top Agency Houses in Calcutta commanded power derived from a different domain. The big Agency Houses in Calcutta were connected with London East India Agency Houses (by 1820 about 20 of them in London). Individually each House in London acted as the protector of the interests of its Indian counterpart. (E.G.Fairlie Fergusson & Co. of Calcutta = David Scott & Co., Later Fairlie Bonham & Co. London; Palmer of Calcutta = Palmer-Mackillop, London; Mackintosh, Calcutta = Rickards-Mackintosh, London; Alexander & Co., Calcutta = Fletcher Alexander & Co., London). Collectively the London East India Agency Houses managed to have their constituents represented in the Court of Director of the East India Company. They invested the fortunes sent by merchants and civil servants in India stocks and "the votes thereby obtained in the Court of Proprietors were usually put at the service of the Agency Houses who used them, especially in the election of Directors, to increase the strength of Private Trade and City interests".[15]

Further, the Agency Houses in India had influence on the Government in India not only through the Court of Directors, but directly: the civil servants identified their interests with the Agency Houses for their savings were invested in those firms; the government was interested in keeping Agency Houses stable for its revenue "in particular opium and the customs, are liable to be materially affected by the success or failure" of Agency Houses; finally, in the transfer of funds through triangular trade with China and in subscription to public loans the Agency Houses' help was essential to the government.[16]

Thus the Agency Houses had influence over governmental policies and this in conjuction with their monopolistic position in the market enabled them to dictate terms to native money capital. Only at times of crisis and tightness in the money market, indigenous loan capital was in a position to bargain for better

terms. At such times, as in 1811-12, 1814, 1818, 1822, 1826-27, 1830 and 1833, the Government granted loans to Agency Houses out of public funds (a total of Rs 1.47 crores in 1814-33). This eased the money market, the interest rate fell, and contumacious native capitalists were cut down to size. Possibly this experience over three decades discouraged participation of native capital in Agency business rather than any "lack of entrepreneurial outlook".[17]

That brings us to our second point of difference with the received version of history. It has been suggested that the "entrepreneurial outlook" was lacking in Bengal. From the Palmer papers we get a good deal of evidence which may be interpreted in this way. European capital was moving to new fields while Indian capitalists (with the exception of entrepreneurs like Dwarkanath Tagore) were withdrawing themselves into the safe and constricting shell of rentier type investment. We have already noted Palmer's observation that Indian capital was attracted more by government bonds and savings banks than commercial dealings.[18] Cossinath Bose approached for supplying *korah* textiles, sends instead money "for investiture [sic] in government 4 per cent notes".[19] Another trusted friend and businessman Radhamadhab Banerji is "very wisely laying out all [his] money in houses".[20]

Motilal Seel is approached in vain to invest in collieries; Palmer, himself unable to raise that much capital (about Rs 60,000 was the estimated price) points out to him prospects in joint industrial investment. "The short notice of sale of the Ranee Gunge Colliery, given by assignees of Alexander & Co. is perhaps significant of its hidden value, as of latent purchasers. In other words, I suspect a job; which you and others may contend for more fairly."[21] We do not have Seel's reply to this suggestion but we find Palmer soliciting Europeans henceforth and we know that Carr, Tagore & Co. responded to this opportunity. N.K.Sinha has compiled a good deal of valuable evidence on Bengali businessmen's tendency to "withdraw from any adventurous business activity" and the "gradual disappearance of a trend towards commercial capitalism".[22] The explanation offered is that "the joint family system ... only led to very costly litigation and hindered capital accumulation"; "that acquisition of wealth led almost inevitably to investment in land which was also regarded as an investment in standing"; that there was "excess of luxury and fruitless expenditure on every social occasion" and on "religion and charity".[23] A.K. Bagchi has already demolished the hypothesis that the permanent settlement and diversion of capital to land explain the investment pattern of Bengal capital.[24] As for the joint family system, it was as much a feature of Bengali business community as the Marwaris in Bengal and therefore the performance of these communities can hardly be explained in terms of that factor. In fact, if we are to believe Milton Singer and Shoji Ito far from being dysfunctional, joint family system among the Chettis in the south played a positive role in the mobilization of capital and in management.[25] Nor are the differences in the value systems embedded in the culture of the Bengali and other business communities clear enough to justify a theory explaining disparities in business performace in terms of values. Is it not far better to exhaust possible explanations in the economic realm to understand

the behaviour pattern of the business communities and assign a residual role to the socio-cultural factors ? In my view the answer cannot be in the negative. While one may not agree with H.G.Aubrey's explanation of investement preferences in underdeveloped countries (for the systemic features of colonialism are grossly neglected) his basic premise is what no economic historian should have reasons to quarrel with: "first search for economic motivations of investment behaviour before I concede that the limits of economic analysis have been reached, as they eventually must be."[26]

Our argument, therefore, is that 'withdrawal' of native big capitalists into rentiership of various sorts was a rational reaction to the unfavourable terms forced upon native capital participating in Agency business, an outcome of the monopolistic powers exercised by the top European Agency Houses with the aid of the colonial government. An additional factor was the excessive risk involved in Agency business—given the possibility of European constituents' sudden withdrawal and remission of capital to England, the possibility of the government's intervention, and the near certainty of racial discrimination at every level of operation.

Finally, one should note that possibly the role of native loan capital in the Agency business has been underestimated. From Palmer papers it seems that there was increased dependence on native capital after 1829; in this period well-known names such as Moti Lal Seel, Dwarka Nath Tagore, Raghuram Gossain, Rustomjee Cowasjee, etc. figure prominently. Even in the earlier period, according to J. Palmer, native capital played an important role in his firm and in agency house business in general. On the brink of the crash Palmer wrote a letter to the members of the government committee on public loans to be given to agency houses:

> The government should "deal out accommodation with an unsparing hand... in order that for a time the great merchantile houses may become independent of the native money dealers whose continued hesitation to renew their wonted pecuniary transactions (not with us only but with every house in Calcutta) renders it absolutely impossible to count upon their assistance. ... We know indeed that the principal Gomostahs of the great up country shroffs and other capitalists have received and already executed orders from their employers, so that the actual means at the disposal of moneylenders in Calcutta are now induced (reduced?) in an alarming degree and many of the principal native residents have conceived *a notion that the entire run of Calcutta is at hand*. Our situation among the European Houses has the peculiarity that we hitherto enjoyed beyound comparison a more extensive command of native capital. . . ."[27]

It was not the Agency Houses alone which thus depended on loans, chiefly short-term loans, of native capital. The European planters and traders the Agency Houses supported were in turn dependent on native capital. These Europeans were, Palmer writes to M. Ricketts:

"men set up by us on a limited scale; and whose apparently [sic] regular and sure transactions with the shroffs tempt that class to proffer assistance the Agent never contemplated; and so the ball [starts] rolling on and accumulating, the Agency begins to demur and shroff becomes wary and clamorous. Then comes the disclosure of embarrassment [i.e., inability to repay shroffs] and an urgent requisition [for cash advance from the Agency House]; and for so much as the Agent's credulity may be taxed at, the shroff gets satisfied; but the agent then demands security to cover both his old and his new advance; [the agent is] believing that he has liquidated all claims, when in truth he had only discharged those which the planter or trader could not ward off".[28]

These two lengthy quotations are given to show how the European planter, trader and agent were like conjurers keeping several balls up in the air at the same time,—a trick which dashed to the ground as soon as the circulating capital was withdrawn by the native capitalist. Hence the need for extramarket pressures from the government: the manipulation of loans, debt liquidation, lowering of interest rates on public securities to ease the money market in times of crisis.

In the post-1831 period, it is clear, a small European businessman, given the tightness of the money market, was for the time being at a disadvantage *vis-a-vis* native capitalists. "Capitalists seem to shirk an agency, only business safe and good can be attracted by cash."[29] One must also bear in mind the facts that this was the period of the gradual replacement of the Agency House system with the modern managing agencies and that, having undergone liquidation recently, Palmer's credit in the market was at the lowest ebb. Palmer's correspondence in 1832-34 is full of importunities for loans from former Indian business associates and clients.[30] Raghu Ram Gossain, his Indian associate in the past, refused to loan money and Palmer depended heavily on Motilal Seel and D.N. Tagore up to May 1835 by which time "RRG has resumed his relations with me thank God".[31] The terms on which loans were obtained were stiff: "I am staggered", Palmer writes to Motilal Seel, "by your short date loans and high rate of interest and trust you may conveniently be more indulgent to me in both respects".[32] Natives were beginning to prefer "safe investments in government securities and government Agents and savings Banks absorb the ready cash of commercial men; Rich Baboos make short advances at 10 or 12 per cent for commercial purposes and not within the reach of men without substance".[33] Loans were short term because the returns were higher if capital could be rolled faster: "Money gets dearer [underlined in original to emphasise the pun referring to the high interest rate] to his [Raghu Ram Gossain's] heart every day, and because he can turn it frequently here, he is restive under delays".[34] While Palmer complained in this fashion, the same principle operated in his business too—"turning" money as frequently as possible—for his profits too were from the merchant capitalistic investment confined to the sphere of circulation.

Finally, a few words on how the emerging picture of relations between indigenous and foreign capital in relation to the conceptual framework of the 'comprador: national' dichotomy. That is too often misused to the detriment of

our understanding of the specificity of the historical situations in which so-called comprador and national capital relate themselves to foreign capital within the colonial system. The 1928 comintern thesis on the colonies stated: "The national bourgeoisie in these colonial countries does not adopt a uniform attitude in relation to imperialism. A part of the bourgeoisie, more especially the trading bourgeoisie, directly serves the interests of imperialist capital (the socialed compradore bourgeoisie). ... The remaining portion of the native bourgeoisie, especially the portion reflecting the interests of native industry, support the national movement. ..." A Soviet work reiterates this more precisely: "the national bourgeoisie is that part of the indigenous bourgeoisie that personified the development of its own national capitalist mode of production, and this independent capitalist production is the basis of its existence. . . . The comprador bourgoisie is concerned mainly with trade operations connected with the export of indigenous raw materials and the import of manufactured goods from imperialist countries, as well as credit and money dealings".[35]

The application of the simple comprador-national paradigm (derived from the historical experience of China)[36] to nineteenth century India raises many problems. For one thing, the dichotomy is best conceived as polarities representing two ends of a *continuum*. Along this the individual or firm or group may travel in course of their evolution and, further, they may simultaneously participate in activities defined as compradorish or national capitalists. The recognition of the intermediate state or form is essential to the identification of the concrete form which is specified by the historical situation, the contradiction between foreign and national capital assumes. The situation was altogether different in China on account of the treaty ports, (as K. Greenberg, Edward Le Fevour and Hu have described) and no class corresponding to the Chinese comprador arose in India; the role of the *gomasta* and the moneylender attached to the interloper and civil servants in private trade was however very much like that of compradors. On the other hand native loan capital in agency business, usury capital in petty commodity production, merchant capital involved in internal trade, etc. although subordinated by foreign capital and although not involved in "independent capitalistic production", may not perhaps be characterized as comprador. More detailed study of the modes of subordination of indigenous capital alone can help us refine the fixed categories which are often applied in an ahistorical and hypothetical-deductive fashion to India's past.

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21

Colonial Forms of Crisis Management and Inter-Sectoral Imbalances*

(A Case Study of the Jute Industry and Commercial Agriculture in Bengal 1900-1939)

SAUGATA MUKHERJI

Colonial conditions shaped the market for agricultural produce in the agrarian structure of twentieth century Bengal. Forces set in motion at the turn of the previous century made for the emergence of an agrarian society where the acquisition and possession of wealth and property did not usually result in productive investment or better management of existing resources. Thus the possessing classes showed a marked tendency to extract absolute surplus from land. This was ensured either through various forms of rack-renting or by maximizing gains from the growing profitability of purely commercial ventures or credit operations opened up by the growth of commercial agriculture. Opportunities for such ventures were naturally greater in the case of commercial crop production and marketing.

It is in this context that an examination of the phenomenon of the growth of jute as a commercial crop in this region from the second half of the nineteenth century becomes very necessary. There were also close links between the financing, cultivation and marketing of jute and rice, the major food crop in this area. But the main reason for the importance of jute in Bengal as a commercial crop from around the second half of the nineteenth century is that this commodity was used as perhaps the principal agency through which the surplus was extracted from agricultural producers.[1] It is true that among all crops of this region, jute, wherever it was grown, was the main cash earner for the peasantry. It is also true that jute cultivation increased money incomes for agricultural producers, at least initially. This was indeed the reason why cultivators took to it so readily. What was more important, however, was that production of this particular crop fitted very easily into the groove of petty production in traditional agriculture at this time. This was because, in the first place, raw jute cultivation did not require any additional degree of capitalization, and secondly, because world demand for jute was large enough to allow numerous intermediate trading groups to operate in the market with adequate margins of profit. These groups in turn, could supply the necessary credit and market facilities to raw jute growers.

However, it was only in the twentieth century that jute acquired a special significance. It became the commodity on which credit and exchange relations in agriculture depended in Bengal.

It was in fact the function of jute as the single most important explanatory variable in fluctuations in agricultural income that made it such an important agency for extraction of surplus from the agricultural sector. The influence that jute exercised over the production process in agriculture continued to grow over the years almost upto the end of colonial rule in this country, or at least, upto the early forties.

The process of such developments was also influenced in a large measure by the role of the jute manufacturing industry on the demand side, in the market for raw jute. Profit maximization in this particular industry did not depend on an expansion of the domestic market, but on expansion of international trade, or on the free flow of goods in the world market, particularly transportation of primary goods. When slumps set in international trade or the use of substitutes for jute packing material led to contraction of the market, the industry responded by curtailing output and selling in a smaller market. In this way, it could maintain or even raise the rate of profit. Because it was possible to maintain or increase profits on relatively small levels of output, the industry tended to operate as a closed unit. This was the reason for the combination, formed in 1884, of the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA). In time this organization became a powerful barrier against the entry of new competitors, mainly because new jute mills found it very unprofitable to operate outside its fold. This was reflected for instance in the slow rate of growth in the number of actual mills as opposed to growth in capacity (loomage), even during such periods of expansion as the years of the First World War. Moreover, the slight increase that did take place, did not bring in any new companies except a few, most new mills being offshoots of existing concerns.

The closed or restricted nature of the industry since its very inception influenced its relations with the primary sector supplying raw material for it. Since the IJMA became, over the years, the principal consumer of Bengal's raw jute, the scope for expansion of jute cultivation was never unlimited here. Further, even small changes in the volume of production of jute manufactures in Bengal tended to have a disproportionately magnified effect on the incomes of growers or suppliers of raw jute. It has been examined elsewhere[2] how the IJMA tightened its control over the internal market in raw jute during the fourth and fifth decades of the twentieth century when the industry, owing to its own structural imperfections, was faced with the prospect of falling profits.

Now, there has been a tendency, quite noticeable in recent years, among economic historians and social scientists analysing the later years of colonial domination of south Asia to explain the poverty of Indian agriculturists in terms of an inadequate exposure to market forces. Thus, it is argued that only such sections of the peasantry who produced mainly for the market were in fact those who ultimately emerged as prosperous farmers, differentiating themselves from the larger mass of impoverished and indebted peasantry and gradually assumed the role of landlords or moneylender-cum-landlords. It is also maintained[3] that

the solvent producers originally borrowed quite heavily, but they utilized such loans mainly for productive purposes. Because their rate of repayment was fairly high, their credit-worthiness rose in the market and they got loans at a lower rate of interest. On the other hand, the larger mass of the peasantry who became gradually dispossessed owed their condition to an initially low level of indebtedness arising from their relatively isolated position as producers mainly for own consumption or for local markets. It was because of this marginal involvement with market production and the monetized market economy that their borrowings were consumption oriented. This in turn accounted for the rate of repayment being fairly low and the rates of interest charged on such loans being so high. In the process, these sections of the peasantry sank deeper and deeper into debt, in spite of starting from a much lower initial level of debt.

Such assertions might have been taken more seriously if they had been made at a level of abstraction and not in the specific context of Bengal's agrarian society from around 1921-46.[4]

Within that specific context, it would in the first place, be necessary to enquire, whether production of commercial crops like jute constituted the totality of the process of commercialization of agriculture. One must also bear in mind which particular years of Bengal's agrarian history in the ultimate phase of colonial rule one is concerned with. In the over-all context of commercialization of agriculture in Bengal it must be noted that jute had very close links with the production and marketing of rice in this area for the greater part of the period under review; indeed in the first two decades of the twentieth century, not only jute but also a sizeable volume of rice was cultivated mainly for the market, either proximate or distant.[5] When discussing the problem of periodization of the history of commercialization of agriculture in early twentieth century Bengal, it is important to remember that because Bengal's domestic economy had become closely tied to the world market, it was also subject to violent changes that affected the international economic scene during this time. Some very drastic changes in the structure of credit and market relations were ultimately reflected in a restructuring of class relations in the rural society.[6] For instance, a major disruption in world trade in the years of the depression and those following immediately after had extremely adverse consequences for primary producing countries like India owing to familiar reasons like the worsening of the terms of trade, falling export surpluses, a fall in necessary imports and a general and palpable decline in the incomes and consumption of the vast majority of the people. More specifically in Bengal, there was great increase in the incidence of indebtedness among the peasantry, followed by large scale outright sales of *raiyati* lands in the middle and late 30s which increased even more in the 40s. This process of transfer of lands from large sections of the cultivating peasantry replaced the earlier practice of land mortagages for debt redemption. Around this time, there was also a sudden decline in the commercial importance of rice[7] which made jute the only cash earner for many cultivators and this led to an even greater direct control by the IJMA and its component units over the process of financing and marketing of raw jute. The provincial government also introduced a series of legislative measures at

this time to try and check the increase in agricultural indebtedness. All these factors combined to bring an almost complete drying up of the existing and traditional sources of rural credit in Bengal in the post-depression period. Although it is very likely that as a result of extensive land transfers during this period, Bengal's agrarian society had become much more sharply divided or differentiated than ever before and that landowners and substantial peasants were taking advantage of existing conditions to dispossess the distressed peasants, now suddenly left without their traditional sources of borrowing. Obviously, the difference between the rich moneylending land-owners and the former type of professional moneylenders was that the latter were less eager to recover the actual sums loaned by them. Instead they used their hold over the indebted peasants to dispossess them of thier small holdings and then to resettle them on the same land with inferior rights and a much greater degree of bondage to the debtors.

From the very beginning of the 40s, however, more changes followed. With the launching of the 'grow more food' campaign and a statutory restriction imposed on the area cultivable under jute, rice regained its commercial importance. But even more important was the phenomenon of profits on hoarded foodgrains—a process greatly aided by the sudden increase in money supply at this time. When the resulting scarcity led to widespread distress and famine in 1943, there was once again a great demand for agricultural credit in the following years. This latest shock affected an even larger mass of the agricultural population and not necessarily the poorest sections of the population only. A new wave of differentiation completed the process of polarization between substantial profiteering land-holders and a vast mass of near destitute cultivators that had started earlier. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the pressures of the world market were felt in the domestic economy through exchange relations in capital supply and the product market. In the 30s and 40s, however, such pressures directly entered production relations in agriculture, in the relations between the employed and the employer engaged in agricultural production.

It is, therefore, quite important to keep in mind that certain short-run developments in Bengal's domestic economy had a pronounced bearing on long-run developments like the restructuring of class relations in the countryside. Only by connecting and piecing together all the relevant processes that affected the agrarian economy in this area through various sub-periods of the first half of the twentieth century, can one proceed to take an overview of the impact of colonialism on agrarian life in Bengal or eastern India for the last fifty years or so of colonial rule. These sub-periods may be classified in the following way: (i) 1900-1913, the period of growing international and internal commerce, (ii) 1914-21 the First World War and its aftermath when there was a tremendous boom in the jute industry, (iii) 1922-29, a period when there was a relative and mild upswing in agricultural prosperity, (iv) 1930-39, the years of the depression and the continuation of agrarian distress afterwards, (v) 1940-47, or the period of the Second World War and the agrarian situation at the time of Independence and Partition.

The periods 1900-1913, 1914-21 and 1922-29 were a time when Bengal's domestic economy was becoming increasingly susceptible or even vulnerable to the pressures of the world market as mediated by British commercial policies and practices in the colonies. The subsequent decades of British rule in this part of India (comprising the periods 1930- 39 and 1940-49) witnessed the results of the full impact of certain developments on Bengal's economy that had become noticeable during the early years of the twentieth century. An attempt has been made here to work out the implications of the commercial importance of jute and rice in Bengal's agrarian economy. It becomes all the more necessary, therefore, to look at certain general trends of the growth of India's foreign trade and their relation with the trade and production of rice and jute. It is also necessary to understand the conditions under which the jute manufacturing industry emerged as a highly oligopolistic structure with a high rate of return because of its over-all control over factor prices, at the same time being unable to tigger off any process of growth either within itself or in its surroundings.[8]

II

In the early twentieth century and specifically, before the first World War, the Indian economy as a whole was linked with the world market in such a way that fluctuations in the external demand for its staple exports or for its currency (for buying goods or investing in export venture) had a disproportionately large effect on price fluctuations in the domestic market and on the working of its entire monetized economy. All parts of the agrarian economy which had strong ties with the export sector were also very sensitive to outside influence. Moreover, the agrarian economy had to function under conditions imposed by structural imperfections in the domestic credit network as well as the strong control exercised by the organized commercial and banking sector that connected the different sectors of the country's economy to each other and with the world market.

The years 1900 to 1914 constituted a period of substantial expansion in foreign trade. Along with a continuous increase in external demand for Indian staples and a stability in the exchange rate of its currency, supplies could be kept up from good harvests during the initial years of the century. The volume of foreign trade reached its peak in 1907/08, but a temporary slump set in immediately afterwards. Simultaneous developments like a failure of the monsoon in 1907 and consequent bad harvests, a noticeable fall in Indian exports over the next two or three years owing to a temporary depression in the world market and a depreciation of the rupee combined to bring about a substantial reduction in the balance of trade surplus. Conditions however quickly returned to normal, so that there was a renewal of expansion in foreign trade, with exports always keeping ahead of imports. During the heyday of 'free trade' policy in India, therefore, it could be said that the country's economic performance was measured by its favourable trade balance and by the stability in its currency exchange rate during a period of relative boom in the world market.

By 1913, the cotton textiles, jute manufacturing, coal mining and the engineering industries had become quite well established. Even so, a large part of India's foreign trade in that year was no different from the traditional pattern of exchange of primary produce for manufactured and capital goods. Although there were changes in the direction of India's foreign trade, with the proportion of dealings with non-empire countries registering a fair amount of increase, Britain continued to figure as India's most important trading partner, specially dominating its imports. However, here too the USA, Germany and Japan had begun to make inroads, accounting for the marginal fall in Britain's share in India's imports from 69 per cent in 1900 to 64 per cent in 1914. On the export side, however, from 1900 to 1913, continental Europe accounted for more Indian exports than Britain, whose share fell from 53 per cent in 1866-70 to a mere 26 per cent in 1909-13. According to B.N. Ganguly's estimates,[9] the British empire as a whole took Rs 94 crores worth of Indian goods in 1913/14, of which the share of UK alone was Rs 58 crores. Non-empire countries imported Rs 155 crores worth of Indian goods (the respective shares of mainland Europe, USA and Japan being Rs 85 crores, Rs 33 crores and Rs 23 crores), resulting in a balance in India's favour of Rs 100 crores. After meeting its deficit with the British empire, which amounted to Rs 34 crores (the break-down showing a deficit of Rs 59 crores with the UK and a surplus of Rs 25 crores with the rest of the empire), India still had a positive balance of Rs 66 crores. For those familiar with the British practice of using its surplus balance of payments with India on visible, invisible and capital transactions to meet its increasing deficits with western Europe and north America, there is no element of surprise in these figures.[10] On the other hand, the development of a multilateral foreign trade system for India became a virtual necessity towards financing its import surplus with UK and servicing its debt obligations to that country. Fortunately for India, the rest of the developed world (other than the 'First Industrial Nation') constituted a market where raw material supplies from India were a necessary input for their own industries.

Primary produce, needless to say, formed the bulk of India's exports in the pre-war period, although manufactured and partly manufactured commodities had started appearing in the export lists, sometimes quite prominently. Table I shows the percentage shares of raw materials as well as of wholly or partly manufactured goods of the total exports from India. It appears that the raw materials invariably constituted more than 40 per cent, and occasionally much more of the total exports. The curve for the per centage share of manufactured goods behaved a little more erratically. After sudden jumps in 1905/06 and 1906/07, the curve started to slope downwards till it reached a trough in 1911/12. There was a partial recovery in the next two years, but the proportion of manufactures in total exports could not return to the turn of the century level. Since the only other major group of export commodities consisted of the category 'articles of food and drink', the total weightage of primary products in the total of exports can be easily inferred.

Table I
Percentage shares of (a) raw materials and (b) manufactured and partly manufactured commodities in the total export trade of India: 1902/03-1913/14*

Year	*Raw materials*	*Manufacturers*
1902/03	52.08	25.82
1903/04	62.67	27.64
1904/05	57.40	29.32
1905/06		35.67
1906/07		37.84
1907/08	43.90	
1908/09	44.80	24.50
1909/10	45.30	21.00
1910/11	46.00	18.05
1911/12	44.40	15.90
1912/13	42.80	23.70
1913/14	50.10	22.40

* Source:*Review of the Trade of India*, 1906/07, p. 34 and subsequent volumes. These figures were not given after 1913/14.

On the other hand, throughout this period (1900-1913) India remained the biggest market for British products, of which cotton textiles, certain types of iron and steel and engineering goods were the most important. Of the last, the biggest single component was the import of textile machinery from Britain,[11] and it is perhaps safe to conclude that this constituted the manufacturing capacity of the cotton and jute manufacturing industries, two of the most important export industries in India.

Why was there no expansion of exports of manufactures from India even when there was an acceleration of international commodity exchange? The major constraints on any significant growth of the industrial sector with an outlet in foreign markets are not very difficult to identify when it is remembered that apart from the cotton textiles industry, all other important industries at that time (barring the railways) like the jute, tea or coal mining industries were largely financed, owned, managed or controlled by British firms registered in India, or sometimes even in Britain itself. Such firms operated at a rather exclusive level: apart from financing some of the internal trade necessary for the procurement of raw materials or the marketing of their finished goods, they had practically no involvement at all with the working of the domestic economy. The indigenous banking, credit and marketing networks which mediated between the primary producers and the world market, as also between the local producer and the local consumer could not become the agencies of credit for new Indian industries. This was because of what B.R. Tomlinson describes, quite relevantly in this particular context, as the 'high equilibrium trap'[12] which locked up the bulk of indigenous profits in the non-industrial sectors. Moreover, such indigenous credit agencies, in an attempt to minimize risk, preferred the security of dealing with established foreign firms with easy access to the international money market.

In fact Tomlinson makes a further interesting observation that either "the supply of manufactures from overseas had to be disrupted . . . or the established pattern for the allocation of savings had to be broken down"[13] in order to create conditions where indigenous industrial enterprise, using internal capital, could develop. It was this disruption in the external supply of goods and the breakdown in the internal supply of credit, rather than protective tariffs granted to a few Indian industries that led to any significant increase in Indian industrial production in the 30s and 40s of this century. In eastern India, such developments however, had entirely different consequences bringing about a virtual collapse of the agrarian economy without any compensatory growth in the industrial sector. Meanwhile, so long as favourable conditions prevailed in the world market (as they did upto the outbreak of war in 1914), the Government of India as well as the provincial governments continued to have unwavering faith in the ideology of 'laissez faire', and a firm conviction that external trade was the key to India's economic growth and that as a result of the existing pattern of international specialization, agriculture was the most vital sector in the domestic economy.

A temporary dislocation in the normal flow of trade did occur towards the end of the period under review, when some of the advantages that India had gained were lost during the years of the war. Although in value terms there was an increase in both total imports and exports, the volume of trade declined by 25 per cent in the case of exports and by as much as 50 per cent for imports. Since there was a sharper increase in import prices, the terms of trade went considerably against India. In spite of an export surplus through these years (because of a significant drop in the volume of imports) the economy suffered owing to scarcity of essential commodities and equipment. There was a further shift in the direction of India's foreign trade with Germany being eliminated from both imports and exports and other continental European countries featuring insignificantly under either head. This naturally pushed up Britain's share as well as that of other Commonwealth countries in India's foreign trade, especially in exports. Even in the case of imports, where Britain's share fell well below the pre-war average, it was still the principal source of supplies to India from outside. The gap left by other countries was to some extent filled by USA and Japan who increased their relative shares in India's imports from 2.6 per cent each in 1914 to 10 and 20 per cent, respectively, in 1919.

With this obviously very abbreviated sketch of the broad trends in India's foreign trade in early twentieth century, we may turn next to an examination of the specifics in the world market for jute on the domestic economy of Bengal. The close connection between the trade in rice and jute and the way in which they influenced production decisions in agriculture became quite apparent from the early years of the twentieth century when both domestic and overseas trade in these two commodities started to expand significantly. This, one finds, for instance, that there was a considerable jump in the price of rice in the Calcutta market in 1906/07 when it increased by 55 per cent over the price of 1905/06 as compared to a corresponding increase by only 19 per cent in the Rangoon market.[14] This was followed by a price hike in rice in both the newly created provinces of Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam. This was ascribed to the

"exceptional prosperity" of the jute cultivators, and as evidence in support of it, it was pointed out that the value of imports of rice into these two provinces showed an increase of Rs 441.7 lakhs in 1906/07 over the previous year, and that the value of raw jute exports showed a corresponding increase of Rs 968.9 lakhs.[15] In the very next year there was a further increase in the values of imports of rice and exports of jute by Rs 21.2 lakhs and Rs 188.56 lakhs respectively.[16] It may be noted in this context that the acreage under jute reached an all time high in the Greater Bengal area in 1907/08 for the entire period under review,[17] with a consequent drop in the total yield of rice.[18] This naturally created a strong internal demand for rice and a shrinkage in the exportable surplus from Bengal. It may be seen from Table II that the imports of rice from Burma into the provinces of Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam taken together increased phenomenally over the years 1906/07 to 1908/09.

Table II

Imports of Rice from Burma into Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam: 1904/05-1920/21* (Unit '000 tons)

Year	*Bengal*	*E.B. & Assam*	*Year*	*Bengal*
1904/05	4		1912/13	17
1905/06	40	27	1913/14	
1906/07	276	239	1914/15	390
1907/08	431	142	1915/16	640
1908/09	530	21	1916/17	513
1909/10	271	7	1917/18	283
1910/11	50	18	1918/19	215
1911/12	3	3	1919/20	522
			1920/21	

* Source: *Review of the Trade of India*, 1908/09, p. 47 and subsequent volumes.

Questions involving the influence of imports of Burma rice over internal consumption of rice in Bengal and over its foreign exports have been examined at some length, elsewhere.[19] It is perhaps sufficient to remember that the exportable surplus in the rice from Bengal dwindled rapidly over the decade 1911/12-1921/22 and that Burma rice not only constituted the bulk of India's foreign exports of the crop but that the shortfall in Bengal proper had to be made up by substantial imports of rice from Burma over almost the entire period that is being discussed here. Thus, one reads in the *Review of the Trade of India*, 1908/09, "For the third year in succession the salient feature of Indian rice trade has been the strong internal demand and the curtailment of exportable surplus. The surplus may be diminished by... [among other reasons], enhanced consuming power among cultivators of crops other than foodgrains, or by a disposition on the part of cultivators to grow such specially profitable crops in place of rice. All of these causes have operated in recent years, but such of them as depend on the exceptionally profitable cultivation of other crops have in 1908/09 been less operative than in either of the two previous years, seeing that the price of jute has greatly fallen. But the shortage of foodgrains in Northern India and in parts of Bengal imposed a heavy demand on the Burma supplies and maintained prices at a level inconveniently high for the exporters".[20]

The point to be noted here is that supplies from Burma almost invariably constituted over 70 per cent (and some times well above) of total imports of rice throughout the entire period. Any diversion of Burma rice into other markets also usually meant a shortfall in the availability of rice for internal consumption in Bengal except in occasional years of good local harvest, as in 1910/11.[21] For about a couple of years in succession there was considerable scarcity in China, Japan and Indonesia resulting in exceptional price increase and very sharp seasonal fluctuations in the market in Burma in 1910/11 and even more in 1911/12. In the latter year there was actually a demand for the crop from Bengal in Rangoon mills, but such a situation was obviously a very unique one.[22] Bengal's ability to export rice to the world market fell rapidly towards the beginning of the 20s and the quantities that actually went out had to be more than matched by imports from Burma.[23]

As mentioned earlier, the export trade in raw jute had been fairly strong during the early years of the twentieth century and cash earnings from the jute crop had helped the cultivators in the purchase of food as less rice was cultivated owing to an expansion of jute acreage. In fact, in sharp contrast to the twenties and thirties, cultivators in Bengal made frequent changes in areas for sowing jute or rice depending on their relative prices.[24]

With the rapid growth of the jute manufacturing industry in Bengal from around 1908/09, domestic consumption of raw jute also registered a corresponding increase; raw jute nevertheless continued as an important item of export upto 1913/14. There was, however, an important difference between the quality of raw jute that was exported and that used by local mills. In the first case, jute was exported after being pressed and baled, i.e., in the form which is known as *pucca* bales of jute. For local mill consumption, however, jute was brought in loose binding (or *kutcha* bales) and sometimes even in loose and exposed bulks. Moreover, the quality of jute exported was of a superior variety (with the usual IJMA markings of 1's and 2's) and the jute used in Indian mills was of many varieties, including those with IJMA markings or 3's and 4's and R's (Rejections) and numerous grades below R. Exports of raw jute fell off during the war years when production in Britain and elsewhere in Europe suffered. There were additional constraints like a trade embargo on exports of raw jute to countries not allied to Britain or completely neutral during the war. An export duty was also levied in 1916 in all exports of raw jute, presumably in an attempt to prevent a price hike that could eat into the profits of jute manufacturers.

The volume of raw jute exports went up again in 1918/19 and 1919/20, but the pre-war level was never reached and owing to a bad crop in 1920/21, such exports came down once again. Following an expansion of jute manufactures in Dundee from 1924 exports of raw jute rose significantly for a few years. So far as the handling of raw jute exports was concerned, there were five associations in Calcutta which did all the business. They were the Calcutta Hydraulic Press Association, the Calcutta Baled Jute Association, the Calcutta Baled Jute Shippers' Association, Jute Balers' Association and East Indian Jute Association. The last named of these dealt in 'futures'.

Agencies dealing in overseas and internal trade in manufactured jute were intimately connected with the various managing agency firms in Calcutta and there was a lot of complexity about the IJMA's different forms or modes of contract, inspection, international arbitration and other bi-lateral and multi-lateral contracts.[25]

When the first world war broke out, the industry found itself in an almost monopolistic position in the world market. Moreover, around this time it strengthened its monopsonistic control over the domestic factor market. The high rate of profits made by this industry[26] may be seen from Table III, showing the total and net profits of jute manufacturing companies during the war.

Table III

Total and Net Profits of Jute Manufacturing Companies in Bengal during the War, 1914-17* (unit) ('000)

Year	*Total profits*	*Debenture interest*	*Net profits (subject to depreciation)+*
1914	982	159	823
1915	4820	159	4661
1916	6309	154	6155
1917	4447	142	4305

* Sources: *Review of the Trade of India*, 1917/18, p. 21.

\+ No allowance had been made for depreciation as there was no uniform practice of writing off depreciation among the jute mills of Bengal.

The ratios of net profits to paid-up capital (not shown in the table) were estimated at 58 per cent in 1915, 75 per cent in 1916, 59 per cent in 1917 and 73 per cent in 1918.[27]

Even more interesting points emerge from Table IV where one can observe the distance between farm prices and buying prices for the mills, raw jute export prices, and the prices of the two main varieties of manufactures. The ratio of price difference between hessian manufactures and harvested jute for the years 1914/15- 1917/18 indeed compels one's attention because these were precisely the years when the industry was making super profits. Subsequently when the industry found itself in difficulties, the squeeze it began to apply through the domestic channels of trade and ultimately upon the primary producer was of such a nature that in conjunction with other forces, it ultimately led to a re-shaping of class relations in Bengal's agrarian society. In 1918, Findley-Shirras, the Director of Commercial Intelligence, India, wrote that the jute industry was Scotland's gift to Bengal.[28] As with Hercules and Nessus' shirt, the Bengal peasantry found out in the course of the next quarter of a century that this gift was truly death trap, leading to dispossession and ruin for the vast majority among them.

Table IV

(i) Average Harvest Price of Jute in Bengal, (ii) Calcutta price of loose jute, (iii) Price of Pucca Bales (400 lbs), (iv) Price of Hessian Manufactures, and (v) Price of gunny manufactures and the difference of each Category with (i): 1911/12-1920/21* (Unit: Rs per md.)

Year	*Harvest price*	*Calcutta loose jute price*	*Differ-ence (ratio)*	*Price of pucca bales*	*Differ-ence with (1) (ratio)*	*Price of Hessian manf.*	*Differ-ence with (1) (ratio)*	*Price of Sacking manf.*	*Differ-ence with (1) (ratio)*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*
1911/12	7.12	8.31	1.16	10.39	1.46	14.60	2.05	11.52	1.62
1912/13	7.69	9.31	1.21	12.86	1.67	19.52	2.54	12.37	1.61
1913/14	10.37	11.19	1.08	16.70	1.61	19.62	1.89	13.25	1.28
1914/15	5.00	6.25	1.25	8.73	1.75	19.33	3.07	11.43	2.29
1915/16	7.19	8.75	1.22	10.67	1.48	22.35	3.11	13.48	1.87
1916/17	7.94	9.12	1.15	10.43	1.31	20.61	2.59	13.50	1.70
1917/18	5.37	6.62	1.23	7.52	1.40	44.89	8.36	19.98	3.72
1918/19	8.31	12.25	1.47	14.28	1.72	28.56	3.44	19.62	2.36
1919/20	8.31	12.31	1.48	15.74	1.89	31.11	3.74	18.34	2.21
1920/21	6.31	13.31	2.11	14.74	2.34	20.98	3.32	13.14	2.08

* Source: *IJMA Annual Report*, 1949, pp. 116-17, Table 5.

At the end of the First World War, the market for jute products (and consequently, for raw jute to some extent) continued to experience boom conditions. This was mainly because of the movement of foodgrains to Europe to relieve post-war scarcity.[29] An increase in the volume of world trade was the main reason for an uninterrupted expansion in the jute manufacturing industry upto 1929, a process which had some beneficial effects on the cultivation of raw jute as well.[30] The crash of 1930, therefore, came like a bolt from the blue.

III

It is widely accepted that the depression of the 1930's caused severe economic hardship in primary producing countries like India, when the international terms of trade went very much against them. This led to an overall fall in values for exports; while the diminishing purchasing power was reflected in the shrinkage of the total volume and value of imports. Equally well known are facts like the sharp decline in agricultural incomes and rural consumption expenditure, un-favourable terms of trade of the agrarian sector in relation to the industrial one, the beginning of a fairly long term process of acute rural distress and the loss of landed property for the less well-to-do sections of cultivators. It is, however, often pointed out that although it took much longer in India than in industrially advanced countries, for prices to recover, a combination of factors brought about an acceleration in the rate of industrialization in this country. These are mainly described in two ways: the first being import substitution efforts on the part of some major Indian industries in the face of declining imports of manufactured

goods; the second, tariff protection granted by the Government of India to a number of Indian industries, generally known as the policy of 'discriminating protection'. Without denying the limited applicability of such conclusions, it is still necessary to ask whether the conditions reflected in the chronic shortage of disposable income and effective demand in this country were favourable for a fast and uninterrupted process of industrial development or not. For the point often missed in the discussion about industrial progress in India at the time is that at the height of the depression, industrial employment actually fell from 1.55 million in 1929/30 to 1.41 million in 1933/34.[31] In the jute industry alone, there was a decline in employment by 14.2 per cent[32] in the decade 1928/29-1938/39 as compared to the previous decade 1918/19-1928/29. Moreover, since the money value of all crop output in British India was supposed to have declined from Rs 10.2 billion in 1927/29 to Rs 4.7 billion in 1933/34, it is easy to see that from "all available estimates of output and consumption there is evidence of a steady decline in per capita consumption during the decade 1929 to 1939".[33]

India's predicament during the depression of the 30s was directly related to its position in the world as a British colony. There were obvious constraints on capital formation in a colonial economy such as a continuous fall in agricultural prices which aggravated the international and internal terms of trade problems and also severely limited the size of the home market. Apart from these, the fiscal policies pursued by the government not only imposed a further drain on this country's resources, they also helped to widen income differences between different sectors of the economy and between regions and classes of people. These income inequalities may have had links with the rise and growth of a number of 'new' industires in India. When one looks for factors responsible for such uneven development of the country's economy, one cannot overlook the role of the colonial state and of colonial private enterprise in India during these crucial years.

There has been a persistent tendency of late to describe in general terms, the years of the depression upto the eve of the Second World War as a period of weakening imperial control so far as Britain was concerned, leading to a greater measure of equality between itself and its 'partners' in the Commonwealth.[34] This line of argument has also been extended, with modifications, to include Indo-British economic relations over the same period. Thus, while a greater tightening of economic controls over India by the metropolitan power during the decade in question is freely admitted,[35] it is also pointed out that the continued possession of India was losing its rationale in terms of the long-term economic interests of Britain[36] and that this ultimately led to the gradual but perceptible process of economic 'decolonization' which preceded actual transfer of power. It is of course, fairly obvious that even before the formal demise of the 'Raj', the structure of the colonial economy in India had been stretched almost to breaking point. But it is also an inescapable fact that in every field of economic policy and action both official and private foreign economic interests managed to derive many material advantages from the unequal economic ties that existed between the two countries from 1929 to 1939.

The foreign managing agencies and their subsidiaries operating in jute, coal and other branches of traditional economic enterprise in eastern India played a crucial role in ensuring the extraction of economic surplus from a progressively impoverished society. What they did was to bring about a worsening of the terms of trade against the sector least able to bear the pressure. The characterization of such foreign private firms as mere "fleas on the buttock of Mother India"[37] cannot hide the fact that they had very morbid—indeed a carcinomatous function upon the cells on which they grew.

One of the major aspects of the operations of jute manufacturing concerns in eastern India through the depression and post-depression periods was the tightening of their monopsonistic control over the raw jute market.[38] A certain degree of demonetization in the market for agricultural produce[39] and the virtual drying up of traditional credit agencies in rural areas greatly aided this process. The factors responsible for the remarkable contraction in rural credit all over India at this time are fairly well known. The circumstances connected with foreign and internal trade, the constriction in money supply, the problems of the rupee exchange rate and the net outflow of gold (and silver) from this country are also parts of a tale that has often been told.[40] Nor is it within the scope of this paper to enter into any detailed discussion ragarding any of these developments. What is germane to the issue is that during this time of crisis, the general economic policy in London was to try and use the Commonwealth as a closed economic unit so that it was relatively free from external shocks and more importantly, to ward off the entry of other advanced industrial nations into this market. So far as India was concerned, Britain's main problem was to devise ways and means of exacting the expected amount of tribute from it and to transfer that tribute to Britain in the face of a sharp fall in India's export surplus. For this purpose, it had to ensure that the Indian rupee remained linked to sterling (after the latter had gone off the gold standard) at the comparatively high rate of exchange of 1sh.6d. to a rupee. This aggravated the financial stringency in the country with a significant contraction in money supply and a further shrinkage in agricultural marketing and credit facilities. It was only the massive sale of gold in the international market that pushed up the export surplus again and enabled the government of India to meet its debt obligations to London. While it is generally accepted that the sale of 'distress gold' meant a large drain of rural savings,[41] it has also been suggested that such sales brought in some amount of liquidity in the coutryside and into the economy in general with the likely consequence of a stepping up of money savings.[42] Even if this were so, it is difficult to see what connection such available savings had with industrialization at that time for, compared to the value of gold exports, the values of imports of mill machinery for three major industries, cotton, jute and sugar,[43] were negligible, being only about 8 per cent of the former for the entire period 1931 to 1938 and only about 6 per cent for 1931 to 1935 when the sale of gold reached its peak.[44]

While the job of raising and transferring the economic tirbute that India had to pay Britain was manipulated by such fiscal and currency measures, the system of Imperial Preferences under the Ottawa Agreement of 1932 sought to ensure

British manufacturing interests in the Indian market. The export of 'staples' might no longer have been vitally important for the British economy, yet sectional interests and pressure groups succeeded in having their way in the framing of commercial policy that affected the process of industrialization in India adversely.[45] Also as a temporary measure at least, it gave Britain a chance, in the wake of the Great Depression, to recover the ground lost to other competing manufacturing countries in a number of trade items. Thus while the protective tariff granted to number of Indian industries reduced non-empire competition, the system of Imperial Preference gave Commonwealth commodities the edge over all rivals. Under the circumstances, the policy of 'discriminating protection' could not act as a very effective agency of import substitution.[46] Moreover, there was an additional incentive for Britain to enforce the system of Imperial Preference[47] because the high exchange rate of the rupee acted as kind of 'import bonus' in the Indian market benefiting all exporters to India. In such conditions the need to close this market as far as possible from non-empire competition became stronger.

IV

The part played by the bigger managing agencies in all branches of traditional industrial enterprise in eastern India through the first half of this century has left a deep and lasting mark on the economy of this region to the present day. The jute industry occupies, however, a rather special place in the economic history of Bengal and its neighbourhood because the situation in which it found itself at the time of the Great Depression and its response to it transformed the entire economic scene in the countryside in large tracts where the jute crop was grown, and also indirectly, in areas where the crop was not actually grown.[48] We shall return to this question in the concluding section of the paper, after a brief analysis of the 'crisis' which is supposed to have affected the jute industry in the early 30s,[49] and the steps that the leaders of the industry took to combat it.

We shall skip a recital of the actual details regarding the fall in demand for jute goods, the fall in profitability and the efforts at restriction of ouput because there is hardly anything new to add to this theme.[50] The structural defects of this industry, like its outmoded technique and organization, the unchecked growth of its excess capacity and other related issues have also been discussed elsewhere.[51] In this paper, only some attitudes of various actors on the scene will be highlighted along with a few relevant facts which shaped such attitudes.

"The jute industry is having its troubles, but the Association is holding together better than it has ever done, and I feel pretty confident that the results of this crisis will in the long run be to the benefit of the industry for it seems likely that the problem of new mills will now be tackled energetically by the Association with or without the help of Government Legislation".[52] Brave words, no doubt, but before this some prominent members of the IJMA had even been reduced to pleading for government intervention in regulating output (working hours for mills) for all operational mills in India within the Association or outside it. Strong opposition to official interference or control and a firm

belief in the process of 'automatic adjustment of supply and demand' had been the guiding principle of the IJMA[53] from its inception, and this conviction had hardened during the years of super-profits made at the time of the First World War[54] and the boom of the late 20s.[55]

When, therefore, the IJMA resorted to stringent measures for restriction of production in 1930 and even more in 1931, there was a revolt in the ranks of the jute mills, with those outside the Association (mostly under Indian management) finding it very unprofitable to abide by the rules.[56] Finally, an agreement was reached through government arbitration in May 1932 which, however, did not succeed in smoothing out the conflict entirely. But the correspondence, notes and memoranda between various interested groups—the Association mills and allied business organizations under European management, Indian business interests and spokesmen of the provincial government—are to be found bunched together in a file,[57] which offers revealing glimpses into the minds of the principal actors. We select for presentaion here the letters and memoranda from the Calcutta Stock Exchange Association[58] and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce[59] as representative of European business interests,[60] the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce[61] for the Indian viewpoint, and the note prepared by the government spokesman, Gilchrist.[62]

The representation from both the Calcutta Stock Exchange Association (SE) and Bengal Chamber of Commerce (BCC) spoke of "a financial collapse of the first magnitude" if there was any further fall in jute values as a result of the abandoning of the jute mills agreement because the "abnormal drop in values during the past year had very seriously tested the financial capacity of a large number of holders" (SE). Benthall[63] also spoke of a crisis that went "far beyond the ordinary repercussions of a slump in trade" (BCC para 2) because "large blocks of jute mill shares are held by some of the banks whose advance have been made on a level much higher than the current market rates". (BCC para 3). In a similar vein: "It may be argued that the present or contemplated action of the IJMA ... is not the direct concern of the Calcutta Stock Exchange. This may be true, but on the other hand there is abundant reason for this association requesting the assistance of government at this time. The 40 to 50 crores of capital invested in jute mills is held not only by investors, large and small, throughout this country, but enormous sums have undoubtedly been advanced by the banks against the security of jute mill scrip". (SE). "At the time when advances were made (by the banks), there was ample margin, but in view of the depreciation in values... it has become necessary for the banks to call for more margin, and in many cases the investor is unable to find the necessary funds. In these circumstances, the only course open to the banks will be to sell the shares in the open market ... The consequences will be that large blocks of shares will be thrown upon a disturbed market ... the market is bound to break with the glut of sellers, and something approaching a debacle is likely to follow, with more and more holders throwing their shares in and selling at panic prices" (BCC para 3). It was also pointed out that "here is already a definite movement in Calcutta towards closing the Stock Exchange temporarily" (BCC para 4). Gilchrist reacted to all this rather sharply (Appendix paras 11-13) hinting that it was not

merely the reaction of the banks that the Association jute mills were concerned about. The agitation for government intervention by some of the leading managing agencies like Andrew Yule was simply directed towards boosting the confidence of some of the biggest shareholders in the market (para 13). While briefly tracing the developments in the recent history of the jute industry (paras 5-10), Gilchrist pointed out that super-profits during the war had attracted new investors in jute mills, mostly Indians (with the older firms adding only marginally to their mill strength). But the industry was going through a period of buoyancy during which the IJMA operated as a firmly homogeneous body which could ignore a very small element of outside competition within the country. In 1929, with the first signs of the coming slump, the Calcutta Association (in consultation with the London Jute Association) decided to deal with growing European continental competition by increasing working hours (para 6). It was, therefore, rather strange that the IJMA should agitate for government assistance against a handful of Indian mills whose productive capacity fell far short of mills in mainland Europe (para 9) specially in view of their own secret build-up of productive capacity and other fraudulent practices such as time-stealing to cheat each other (paras 9, 10). After giving comparative estimates of the resource positions of the older (pre-war) and the new (post-war) mills (paras 22-26), Gilchrist concluded (paras 27, 28) that the IJMA needed no protection from outside mills, and that all that it was interested in, was the maintenance and strengthening of its own oligopolistic combine which made it intolerant of competition in any form. If this rigidity in its attitude brought about a sharp division between the European and Indian mills, that would constitute a far more serious problem than the so-called temporary crisis.

As we shall see later, the jute mills tried to reduce their factor cost by squeezing the agrarian sector at this time,[64] when their profits were no longer as high as they had come to expect over a long period and when their oligopolistic combine had, albeit temporarily, loosened a little. Nevertheless, Benthall was not averse to pointing out the evil effects of the continuing slump in jute trade and industry[65] that were likely to follow on the earnings and economic position of the jute cultivating peasantry (BCC paras 8, 9). He predicted that the average jute cultivator who needed to earn at least Rs 4.25 (Rs 4-4 as.) per maund of jute to recover the cost of production would soon be getting no more than Rs 1.52 (Rs 1-8 as. 4 pies). "... The effect of a reduction in the income of the province to this extent is obvious: It is not only the case of the ryots which has to be considered, but also that of the small dealers and landlords, who being deprived of any cash resources will invitably be driven to despair. An increase of political dissatisfication and crimes of violence is bound to follow" (BCC para 10).[66] Gilchrist's rejoinder to this point and his arguments why the government should not intervene in the matter of adjusting 'the ratio between' the price of manufactured jute and raw jute may be seen from paragraphs 16 to 19 of the Appendix.

The memorandum from the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, however, squarely laid the blame at the doors of both government and the managing agencies (BNCC para 5). "But the question will still remain to be answered as to how in such circumstances the intervention on the part of the Government ...

would secure the protection and advancement of the interests of the agricultural masses.... The Committee would in this connection take the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Government of Bengal to the fact that in the past the Government have invariably treated the interests of the jute growers with indifference. Even those interests which today are showing great solicitude for the interests of the cultivators have always opposed all measures calculated to improve the condition of the agriculturists. A year and a half ago when the whole of this Presidency was united in asking the government to take certain measures to alleviate the distress that prevailed in the jute districts, the representatives of the Jute Mills Association and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce persistently denied the existence of such distress and stressed the undesirability of tampering with the ordinary laws of supply and demand; and the Committee noted with regret that unfortunately the views of this section prevailed with the government of Bengal".[67]

It would, therefore, be incorrect to say that Benthall was consistently opposed to government intervention or any other form of control throughout the 30s, although this is probably the impression one gets from the Benthall Papers.[68] It should be remembered, however, that in 1928-29 there was no disagreement among members about the efficacy of 'free competition' and resolute opposition to any government intervention in any branch of the jute trade. In fact, in 1929 and 1930 the Calcutta Association had sought to kill continental European competition by extending working hours. After that, the Benthall Papers cover the years 1935, 1937 and 1941. Whether this radical shift in his attitude can be attributed entirely to the problems faced in enforcing the agreement of May 1932 under government arbitration is a debatable point.

The change in his attitude could also be due to the fact that he was perceptive enough to realize that the older members still had enough clout to take care of the threat from outside mills and to bring the recalcitrant members of the Association under control. With the receding of the slump from the mid 30s, there was considerable improvement in the jute trade. Moreover, while profits in jute manufacturing were still low, the considerably greater staying power of the older mills gave them a distinct advantage in long term competition with new entrants. There is evidence enough in Benthall's notes, correspondence, etc. to suggest that he wanted to make full use of this changed situation even to the point of eliminating all competition and reestablishing the hegemony of the older and bigger managing agencies.

"I feel it in my bones that we should solve our own problems" Benthall exhorted his fellow members in the IJMA, "and that our predecessors, who built this business, would have thrown up their hands in horror at the idea of asking Government—which will soon be an untried 'Responsible' Government—to intervene"[69]. Thus Benthall was quite sure in his own mind at the end of June, 1935, that while he was 'not exactly advocating' unrestricted competition, he was not 'the least bit afraid' of it either, since at that given moment it would be far more preferable to government intervention which would be setting a dangerous precedent for the future.[70] He saw no reason why the 'older groups' should be afraid to face the situation; their financial position was sound and they had built up their reserves over the years, precisely for the purpose of meeting

bad times and unwelcome competition. If restrictions were to be withdrawn, "it would not be nearly as much of a dog fight as would appear at first sight"; it would also restore much of the business lost to the Calcutta mills as well as discourage fresh ventures in the industry.[71] It was thus basically a question of high present profits against 'future welfare', and it was his "belief that if the Jute Mills Association, regardless up to a point of the margin of profit, increase their production steadily and unflinchingly, it will have the desired effect of making the working of new mills unattractive...".[72]

It took G.B. Morton, a colleague of his in Bird's in Calcutta quite a while to pick up enough courage to fall in line with this way of thinking.[73] Even a few months later Morton was pleading with Benthall not to turn his face against government regulation of mills' working hours.[74] His worries were aggravated by the prospect of some of the leading Indian members of the IJMA like Birla and Hukumchand leaving the Association, if the effort to control the working hours of all the mills was not successful.[75] Even Benthall had to agree that a polarization between European and Indian mills would be undesirablle.[76] Moreover, Morton realized that besides the fact that the profits on sales for most of the non-Association mills were somewhat higher than those of the average Association mill,[77] the chief strength of the Association mills lay in their "large stocks of cheap jute", and so "it is in the interests of the outside mills to get jute (gunny) prices down and keep it down".[78] "It will", he added, "suit them also to have small margins now between cost and selling prices [so that they, unfettered by work- time restrictions, can make money on higher turnover]...".[79] Nor was the threat from outside mills confined only to cut- price competition in manufactures; it also extended to speculation in general in the jute trade. "Some of the outside Jute Mills are big speculators who use their mills as a background for their speculative operations. So even though temporarily they may lose over their Jute Mills they gain on their speculations".[80] It has to be pointed out at this stage that the European managing agencies were not exactly "effectively excluded" from the "operations of the *futka* (futures) market", as has been alleged.[81] By 1935, *futka* operations had become a part of Bird's business.[82]

In 1937, however, Morton seems to have come round entirely to Benthall's way of thinking,[83] for although that particular year was marked by severe competition, Bird's had not come off too badly, although there was a drop in their dividend levels.[84] This was because of Bird's policy of reploughing their undistutrbed and accumulated (i.e., carried forward from previous years) profits in the working of the mills and keeping the internal reserves intact. They preferred it to drawing from the reserves in order to keep dividends high and maintain buoyancy in the share market and confidence among the investors.[85] Although there were some minor problems over the same reserves,[86] on the whole there was optimism among Bird's personnel because of the profits made by every jute mill under their management, and at least one instance of scoring over a big rival concern like Andrew Yule, much to the satisfaction of younger brother Paul Benthall.[87]

On the whole then, in spite of periodic downswings, the older and bigger managing agencies succeeded in weathering the depression and post-depression years until the boom that followed with the outbreak of World War II. They had

succeeded in throwing much of their burden on the growers and traders in raw jute and this is amply borne out by the behaviour of the relative price curves shown in the accompanying chart. The ratios between Calcutta loose jute prices and harvest prices of raw jute, and between export prices of raw jute (*pucca* bales) and harvest prices, did not fluctuate as sharply as the ratios between the two types of jute manufactures and harvest prices. Nor was the range of difference in the case of the former two series with harvest prices any where near the range of difference that the last two had with harvest prices over the decade 1927/28-1937/38. Now the market for exportable raw jute (made up mainly of the first four grades of raw jute, among which 1's and 2's predominated) was entirely different from the market for jute consumed by Indian mills (usually below R's or rejections) and it was with these varieties that the Calcutta market in loose jute was concerned. A glance at the behaviour of the three relative price curves: hessian/harvest price, sacking/harvest price and Calcutta wholesale loose jute/harvest price makes the entire picture very clear. It was precisely during the years that the harvest prices as well as the wholesale prices of raw jute showed a steep decline that the profit margins of the jute manufacturers varieties of jute shot up. The years 1931/32-1934/35 witnessed the impact of the depression on the growers and traders in raw jute; for jute manufacturers the situation provided the opportunity of exercising their monopsonistic control over the supply of raw jute. In a situation of diminishing economic surplus, it became increasingly necessary for the foreign jute mill sector to concentrate the instruments of exploitation in its own hands.[88]

V

The vulnerability of traders in raw jute and financiers of raw jute production was clearly revealed when the depression set in by the sharp drop in credit facilities in Bengal. For the cultivating peasantry, it meant the removal of the cushioning effect that the traditional system of rural trade and credit network had so far afforded them. It also meant their greater exposure to the exploitative mechanism of an increasingly monopsonistically structured jute industry in Calcutta. It has been seen elsewhere[89] what the consequences were for the cultivating peasantry, of a basic (and growing) weakness in the supply side built into the raw jute market structure on levels of income, consumption and indebtedness. The impact of the depression on the agrarian economy of Bengal was, however, most dramatically manifested in the form of a rapidly changing pattern of exchange relations, and more importantly, of production relations in agriculture. A fresh wave of differentiation among the peasantry that started around this time was to develop and intensify in course of the next decade leading to the emergence of a new structure in class relations in the rural society of Bengal by the time of Independence; a structure in which a newly rich and propertied section of the peasantry confronted a vast mass of dispossessed and near destitute cultivators. This structural transformation in social relations was primarily the result of fundamental changes in the process and mode of surplus extraction in this region. These changes in turn, were sparked off by a number

of crises, experienced by the British empire as an economic unit and the changing nature of the economic domination of India by Britain during the period under discussion.

The analysis of such major changes at the macro-level does not fall within the scope of this paper. We confine ourselves here to an examination of the specific way in which one particular section of colonial private enterprise, i.e., the jute industry adjusted its methods in face of the crisis and consequences for primary production performance as well as changes that were brought about in agrarian production relations in Bengal during the 30s and the early 40s.

The initial impact of the depression on the agrarian economy of Bengal was felt by the sudden and dramatic fall in agricultural prices. In the case of jute this was even sharper than the trend noticeable in the value of all crops. The fall in the price of rice was more gradual, but more persistent. This tendency was linked with the phenomenon of a temporary decommercialization of rice so far as Bengal or even India was concerned. Prices of primary produce had been showing a declining trend since the 20s, and the fall in agricultural prices on a global scale had started with overproduction mainly in North America as a result of technological break-through in large scale capitalist farming. Primary producers in poorer countries like India, however, had to suffer the consequences without having participated in that process of technological improvement and the accumulation of assets that follows from such change. When the depression hit the world market its effects were keenly felt in the Indian home markets. In eastern India the peasantry were weighed down by the additional burden transferred on them by the jute industry as a measure to check its own falling profits.

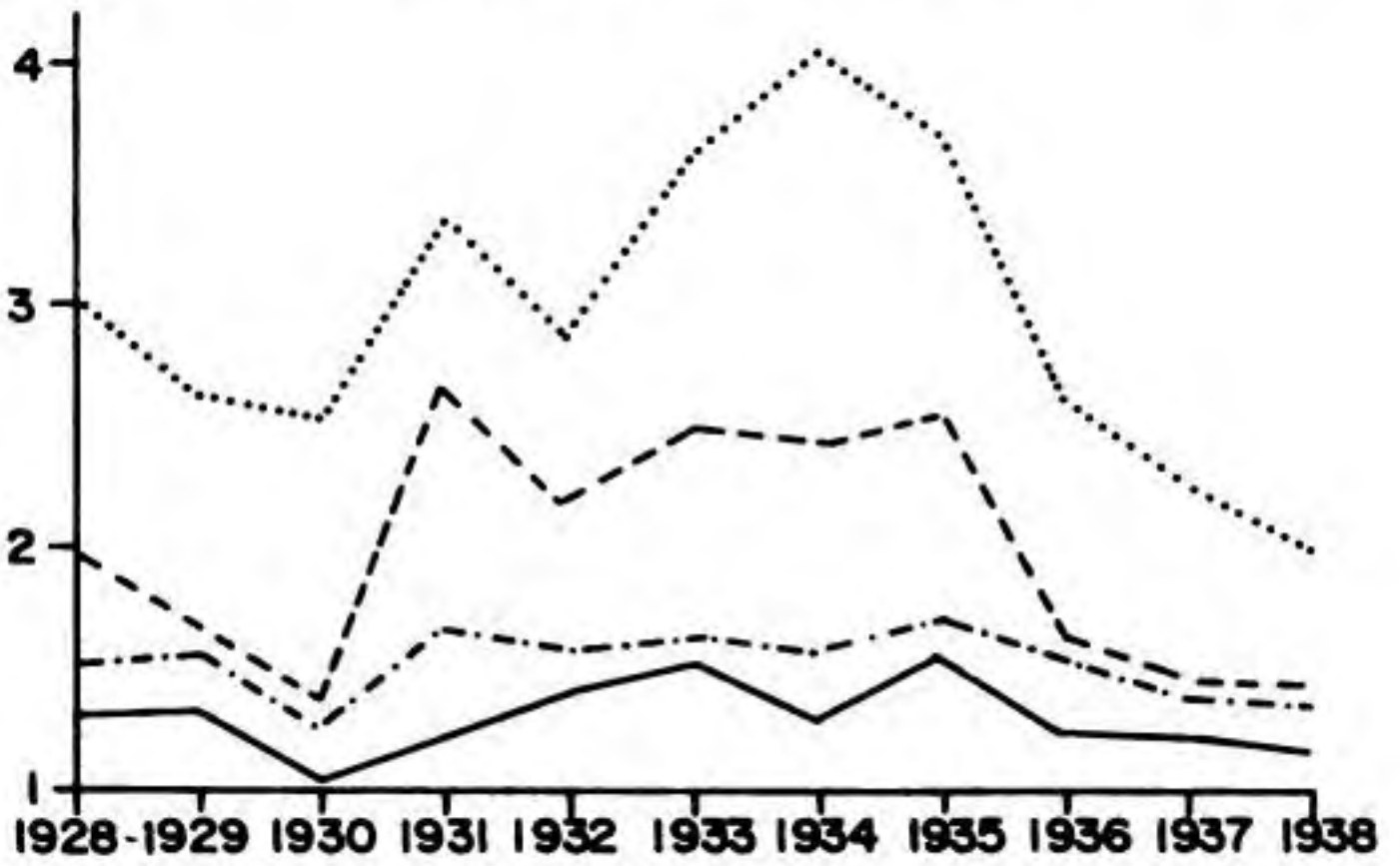
The various monopsonistic practices of the IJMA to control and regulate raw jute prices had evolved over the years and were not new in the years of the depression. However, the degree of monopsonistic control and the rate of exploitation of the primary sector became intensified during this period. The net results of the different methods adopted by the IJMA to maintain and strengthen its mechanism of control was that the association mills could, at will, stop buying raw jute leaving producers stranded with large quantities of unwanted and worthless raw material. It was estimated[90] that in the beginning of the 1931-32 season the jute mills of Calcutta had a carry over of 41 lakhs of bales "which, at the present rate represents about eleven months consumption".

The drastic fall in prices of agricultural produce, and specially that of jute and rice, considerably reduced disposable incomes of the producers. The influence of the fall in raw jute prices on the aggregate (gross) money income of the agricultural sector was considerable.[91] An estimate of the trend for net retention of cash by agricultural producers showed a decline by 1.62 per cent per year. In spite of severe constriction of agricultural credit, peasant indebtedness rose substantially in the depression years[92] both in jute growing areas of northern and eastern Bengal and in the primarily rice producing districts of western Bengal, although the burden of debt was somewhat higher in the former. We shall return to the various implications of this indebtedness and to similarities and differences between the rice growing and jute growing areas,

after noting the effects of peasant impoverishment on the class of rent receivers. For the plight in which the landowners and the intermediaries below them found themselves was primarily caused by a decline in rural incomes and constriction of rural credit. The following[93] table shows the number of defaulting *zamindari* estates and the amount of default in the initial years of depression. Such defaults continued late into the 30s.

CHART I

Ratio between Harvest Price of Jute and (A) Wholesale price of raw jute in Calcutta, (B) Export price of Baled Raw Jute, (C) Price of Sacking, (D) Price of Hessian: 1928-38.



— Wholesale price of loose raw jute in Calcutta

– · – Export price of baled jute from Calcutta

--- Price of sacking

···· Price of hessian

Base I = Harvest price of raw jute

Source: *IJMA, Annual Report*, 1949, Calcutta, 1950.

Transfers of intermediate tenurial holding rights, registered under sections 12(3) and 18 of the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Act also showed an increase during the depression and immediately after, as Table VI shows.

Defaulting landowners and distressed intermediate tenureholders probably represented the decline of the class of rent receivers who constituted the rural elite of the post Permanent Settlement agrarian society of Bengal. No less important was the virtual withdrawal from the scene of a class which had traditionally provided the trading and financial capital necessary to ensure commercial crop production and other cash needs of the peasantry, including the obligation of regular rent payments. This class of rural moneylenders and traders in agricultural produce were now willing to cut their losses and branch out into other areas of trade or speculation if they could recover part of their

Table V

A Comparative Statement of Defaults in the Payment of Revenue in the March Kist of the years 1929, 30 & 31+

Districts	1929			1930			1931		
	No. of defaulting estates	Demand of Kist (Rs 000)	Amt. defaulted (Rs 000)	No. of estates	Amt.of Kist (Rs 000)	Amt. defaulted (Rs 000)	No.of estates	Amt.of Kist (Rs 000)	Amt. defaulted (Rs 000)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Burdwan*	14	36.4	6.4	21	149.0	125.7	47	135.5	102.5
Birbhum	75	422.4	13.7	160	421.9	56.4	194	421.6	30.5
Bankura	26	237.0	0.4	27	236.9	174.5	27	236.9	1.4
Midnapore	37	52.9	29.7	59	104.6	62.0	118	238.5	223.2
Hooghly	141	293.1	11.4	192	293.0	26.7	148	292.9	26.2
Howarh	44	137.6	5.4	37	137.6	4.0	26	137.6	5.4
24-Parganas	196	783.4	92.4	208	819.5	96.0	279	882.9	250.5
Nadia	145	283.6	50.5	152	283.9	52.4	302	287.3	113.2
Murshidabad	38	378.9	13.5	58	381.0	20.4	160	383.1	88.9
Jessore	104	255.0	14.2	102	254.9	33.6	172	255.3	47.7
Khulna	48	413.8	37.1	39	415.5	19.8	123	415.5	84.0
Rajshahi	43	366.5	0.3	48	365.6	1.2	151	365.3	36.6
Dinajpur	16	759.9	10.6	38	759.9	14.5	201	759.8	134.2
Rangpur	28	374.5	32.4	38	374.4	37.3	214	374.5	123.9
Bogur	23	127.5	0.4	27	127.4	1.2	162	128.9	19.5
Patna	108	104.7	3.8	123	105.0	4.6	221	104.8	11.9

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Malda	15	173.9	0.1	6	174.8	...	121	175.8	10.3
Jalpaiguri[@] (tea estates and jotes excluded)	8	45.3	1.0	3	45.2	...	6	45.3	2.3
Dacca	15	148.7	4.8	25	149.9	3.5	39	150.1	11.9
Mymensingh	172	248.6	7.8	...	248.9	17.7	...	249.0	40.0
Faridpur	164	145.9	15.0	142	145.4	15.0	269	145.5	31.0
Bakarganj	98	620.9	14.4	114	669.5	28.1	193	674.4	95.8
Chittagonj	35	152.4	26.1	29	152.2	27.0	45	152.1	15.1
Tippara	67	214.9	4.7	89	216.4	7.6	327	216.4	46.6
Noakhali	35	156.2	1.6	42	156.4	0.5	49	156.5	37.8
Total	1695	6933.8	391.2	1779	7189.0	826.9	3594	7392.9	1590.5

(No March Kist in Darjeeling.)

+ Source: as in note 93.

* Excluding estates with demand less than Rs 50.00.

@ For Jalpaiguri figures showing demand of kist is for defaulting estates only.

locked-up capital through the process of distress sales of land and gold. To summarize very briefly findings arrived at elsewhere,[94] there is enough evidence to show that in the jute growing districts of northern and eastern Bengal, sections of the substantial peasantry were increasingly taking over the functions of the traditional moneylending classes even before the onset of the depression. This tendency became even more noticeable in the post depression period. Consequently, land that changed hands during this time began to be concentrated under the ownership of this emerging class of rich peasantry who found it profitable (because of the scattered nature of their newly acquired holdings and falling prices of agricultural produce) to resettle the dispossessed cultivators as sharecroppers. A similar contraction of credit in the predominantly rice growing regions of western Bengal was reflected in the growing importance of loans in kind of grain loans in this area. But the cash requirements of the cultivatotrs

Table VI
Transfer of tenures under section 12 (3) and 18 in absolute and index numbers 1929/30-1939-40

(Base: 1929/30=100)

Year	*Total no. of transfers*	*Index of such transfers*
1929/30	106810	100.00
1930/31	128150	119.98
1931/32	125728	117.71
1932/33	122693	114.87
1933/34	125613	117.60
1934/35	143939	134.76
1935/36	149482	139.95
1936/37	138524	129.69
1937/38	138881	130.03
1938/39	136306	127.61
1939/40	123304	115.44

Source: *Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Presidency of Bengal*, 1929/30-1939/40.

had still to be met. This enabled the superior peasantry to adjust credit relations and to use their own surplus stocks of food in a way which led to the same process of dispossession of the smaller peasantry and their being driven further down the scale of social hierarchy into various categories of landless agricultural workers.

It seems that by the second year of the depression, the poorer sections of the cultivators, or the marginal farmers had exhausted their stocks of reserve or their meagre hoarded wealth in all areas of Bengal. It must have forced them to borrow quite heavily from moneylending rich peasants since credit was no longer readily forthcoming from the traditional sources. In course of the next few years, when settlement of debts became due, this new class of moneylenders had a more direct interest in acquiring rights in land and having it cultivated by the very peasantry who were now forced to part with it. They preferred this to advancing loans on mortgaged land and waiting for prospective buyers, a

method favoured by the more traditional moneylenders to recover their principal. Moreover, legislation by the provincial government to curb agricultural indebtedness tended to discourage the professional moneylenders, as they did not have the same facility of disguising their usurious activity as the classes with direct interest in agriculture and control over cultivators (by way of superior rights in land etc.). The decline in the number of mortgages for debt and the steep rise in sales or transfers of peasant proprietary rights within a few years of the depression may be taken as a clear indicator of this fact.

It should be remembered that after the outbreak of the Second World War, a fresh wave of differentiation set in, specially in the wake of the 1943 famine when even larger sections of the peasantry, including, presumably some elements of the 'middle' peasantry which became dispossessed; and the problem of contradictions between *jotedars* (propertied peasantry) and *bargadars* (sharecroppers) became even more acute. But the entire process had started from the time of the depression. It is for this reason that the restructuring of Commonwealth, and specially Indo-British economic relations during this period, and their effects on the national economy of India assume such significance when one looks for an analytical framework for the newly emerging class relations in agriculture in this country. At this time India became more vulnerable to external pressures exerted in the form of a comparative tightening or 'closure' of the Commonwealth market and through the specific measures of surplus or tribute extraction introduced by the imperial government. These measures and market forces helped to bring about deepening inequalities of income among social classes, between different sectors of the economy and between regions specializing in primary and other forms of export-oriented production and those catering mainly to the home market. Such lop-sided development, or rather, such 'combined' underdevelopment of the Indian economy succeeded in totally upsetting the stability of the colonial economic structure in this country. One of the consequences of this was that continued or intensified surplus extraction in different regions of India could no longer be contained within the framework of a production organizaion founded upon petty peasant proprietorship.

APPENDIX

Excerpts from a Note by R.N. GILCHRIST

[Government of Bengal, Commerce Department (Commerce Branch) File 2J-1 Progs. 87-134B September 1932; Appendix II, Confidential.]

"2. First let me state the case of the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA). Briefly, it is that a crisis is about to develop in the jute manufacturing industry of Bengal owing to the continued fall in prices, which is partly due to a fall in world prices and partly to over-production. As regards the former, the fall in world prices, no action is asked for or is possible.... It is over-production to which IJMA have invited the attention of Government. That over-production,

they contend, is due to three non-Association mills persisting in a policy of working long hours, as against the short hours worked by mills in the membership of the Association. They therefore wish Government to intervene to bring these mills into the Association in order to subject them to Association manufacturing discipline. The balance between production and consumption, as gauged by the Association, is stated to be so fine that the extra production coming from the non-Association mills completely upsets it, and this upset has two effects—first, it reduces prices, and second, it creates a feeling of unease and uncertainty in the market. The non-Association mills, it is stated, are making money by their increased output and reduction in overhead charges; other mills may be tempted to adopt the same course, and if any large section of them do, the IJMA may break up, and unrestricted, cut-throat competition will follow. Output will jump at once, and, in the absence of increased demand, prices will fall, profits will disappear, and many mills will have to be closed down. In this process, the price of raw jute will fall; there will be failures in the bazar; the banks will be involved; all other industries depending on jute manufacturing will be seriously affected, and, we are almost unnecessarily told, Government revenues will suffer, but all these catastrophes will be avoided if Government will only be pleased to intervene to compel the three outside mills to work the hours dictated to them by the IJMA.

"3. ...There are plenty of precedents for Government intervening with respect to raw products. But I can think of none in which Government has intervened to save a *manufacturing* industry by the official prescription of hours of work in order to curtail production.

"4. ...It is, therefore, necessary to analyse their case at some length in order to ascertain, with the material at our disposal, whether, in the event of a collapse, or a likely collapse, Government would be blame-worthy if they took no action.

"5. This requires a short review of recent jute mill policy. Prior to the war, the Calcutta jute manufacturing industry had enjoyed a long period of prosperity, the best index of which is the increase in loomage from 192 in June 1859 to 38,120 in 1914. By 1913-14 the industry seemed to have outrun its market, for a crisis developed in these years which led to the engagement of an American organiser to advise the industry. This organiser gave simple advice that the mills should organise themselves better, with a view to coordinating production with consumption. He had scarcely given this advice when the war broke out. Then followed a period of prosperity unparalleled in any other industry in the world. The demand for war bags so narrowed the scope of production for commercial goods that prices rose to unheard and undreamt of heights. The old intense individualism of the mills did not matter now. Money poured in so fast that almost literally the owners did not know what to do with it. They distributed enormous dividends to their shareholders, and built up huge reserves. The looms increased from 38,120 in 1914 to 39,401 in 1918, a small increase in the light of the prosperity of the industry. In the post-war inflation period more mills were built and more mills added, and there was a temporary setback in prosperity when deflation started, and prices broke in 1920-21. This setback was serious for mills built in the inflation period, for it became apparent

that their capital burden was too heavy. But soon recovery came, and the course of the industry seemed set for permanent prosperity. With falling prices of building materials and equipment, investors began to realise that there were still possibilities in the industry, and more mills were built, most of them by Indian capitalists (From 1924 to now only the following were started under the aegis of pre-war Association mangaing agents-the Megna Mills by Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Co., and the Bansberia Mills by MacNeill & Co., like Mackinnon Mackenzie, in the Inchcape group).

"6. During this period the IJMA strengthened its position out of all recognition, as compared with its pre-war position. Prosperity did for it what adversity could not; it made it a strong homogeneous body, with excellent discipline over its members. Although it did not comprise the entire industry, it was strong enough to disregard outside mills, such as the American mill, Ludlow. But, in due course, Ludlow began to have companions. The Adamji, Hanuman, Premchand, Gagalbhai and Agarpara mills started up—and they did not join the Association. They therefore could work whatever hours they wished so long as the working hours were within the factory law .... In 1929, however, came the first signs of the world slump. The first signs of disquiet came from London. The London Jute Association, on which are represented the Home houses of most of the Calcutta managing agents, was disturbed by continental competition, and to kill that competition, on July 1st, 1929, the Calcutta Association decided to expand production by increasing working hours from 54 to 60 per week. [Also to kill competition by outside mills in Bengal.—J.A. Woodhead.]

"7. This change in policy led to the biggest strike in the history of the industry. This strike has been very fully described in a document placed before the Whitley Commission, and I need not further deal with it here. But I would say here that my experience in settling that strike confirms me emphatically in the view that Government should keep itself clear of the jute manufacturing industry.... if, in 1929, the London and Calcutta Associations were of the view that continental competition could be killed by expansion of production in Calcutta, why does the Association now need government interference to control the 1650 odd looms of three Indian mills? Surely there is something extraordinary in a request for Government intervention in 1932 to bring under discipline a paltry 1652 *local* looms, when the Association in 1929 proceeded of its own motion to deal with 38,000 non-Indian looms.

"8. ... The 1929 policy of 60 hours working was quickly recognised to be mistaken. World prices continued to fall, demand lackened, and stocks accumulated.... The accumulation of stocks has injured the industry as whole, but this seems to be no reason why mills who were not parties to the agreement should now be forced into the Association. The case is different with those mills which, parties to the 1929 policy, seceded from the Association, but prior to 1930, *all* the mills at present attacked by the Association were non-Association mills.

"9. ... There is one aspect of the previous agreement, which came into effect in July 1930, which requires notice. During the post-war years, each mill gave a return of the looms worked. In due course it became evident that the production figures did not agree with the loomage: in other words, it became evident that

either some looms were capable for unheard of production or that there were more looms in existence than were officially declared by the managing agents. When the 1930 agreement was made, therefore, the Association decided to have a census made by two firms of Chartered Accountants—Messrs. Lovelook & Lewis and Messrs. Price, Waterhouse & Peat. The result was astounding. For several years—since the beginning of 1924 there had been an agreement that no Association mill should extend its loomage . . . and the enumeration by an independent authority showed a total of 58,639 looms, as against 40,898 in 1921 and 52,929 as the previously officially registered number of looms, including four newly erected mills and special extensions permitted to the Gondalpara mill on account of an accident.... The Association mills themselves had dishonestly and surreptitiously added about 11 per cent to the productive capacity of the industry against their own agreements. These mills now, as represented by their Association, which covers nearly 57,500 looms, ask Government to interevene to save them from 160 odd looms of mills who were not in existence in this period and who were not at first Association mills when they did come into existence.

"10. ... The most important statement is that of Mr. Benthall, ... with the exception of the paragraphs dealing with the jute grower, his contentions apply to every other industry which has suffered from the slump. In paragraph 2 he says 'The crisis ... goes far beyond the ordinary repercussions of a slump in trade'. Does it? A slump in trade means falling demand, lower prices, a decline in share values in joint stock companies, failures in the trade; these features are, as Mr. Benthall admits, common to all slumps. But he goes on to speak of the special features, the first of which is the part played by banks. I deny *in toto* that the jute position is in principle different from coal or tea in this respect. It may be that the amount of jute held by the banks is more extensive, because the coal and tea position has been more gradual and the banks, it may be taken, have fully safeguarded themselves with respect to advances or shares in these industries....

"12. ... Now coal and tea between them represent an investment of capital of at least as much as jute. What has hapened to the banks? Have they waited till calamity has on them? Have they postponed their calls for cover till the coal and tea trade associations had waited on the Governments of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and of India and on the Chancellor of the Exchequer?

"13. To suggest such a course is an insult to intelligence. But Mr. Benthall would have us believe that the Calcutta banks have *not* called for more margin. That, I should think, is untrue of any well managed bank ..... I strongly suspect that the whole of the agitation for Government intervention arises from further calls for cover from some big holders of shares. Indeed, Mr. Sime when he first saw Mr. Marr, frankly blurted out that had Chajuram not been such a big shareholder is Yule's mills, he would not have come to Mr. Marr at all. (I was present at that Interview). Mr. Marr subsequently was informed by the head of the biggest share-brokers' house in Calcutta that the two biggest jute shareholders who had been called on for cover were Chajuram and Sir Onkar Mull Jatia both closely connected with Andrew Yule & Co. And the agitation started through a personal campaign of Mr. Sime, the head of that firm. Mr.

Sime has used every influence he knows of to persuade Government, but in conversation he has an unhandy habit of blurting out truths which damn his case. I do not wish to pursue personalities further, but I should like again to invite attention to the possible results of Government controlling jute production under the advice of such self-interested parties.

"16. Mr. Benthall goes on to make what might have been an excellent point—the effect of the slump on the ryot. It is a curious thing that when manufacturers and dealers wish to impress on Government the necessity of intervening to 'save on industry, one of the main pleas is the interest of the ryot. It is about the only time we ever hear of it from such sources. The ryot all unknown to him, was used in exactly the same way in the latter half of 1930, when half the dealers in Calcutta were faced with ruin owing to their having speculated badly. The 1930 agitation for Government intervention on the model of the American wheat, Brazilian coffee and Egyptian cotton cases was engineered entirely by capitalists in their own interests; but the main plea was the interest of the ryots, who, as most people who know the districts were aware, had already sold their jute. Now we have the same ingenuous appeal to the tender mercies (and ignorance) of Government; we have another 'save the ryot' campaign when what is really desired is 'save our mills and shares'.Were I a Bengali ryot I should intensely fear jute brokers, bazar dealers, managing agents of mills and all such people when bearing gifts for my own salvation. For I would know that in good times I am about the very last person whose interests the manufacturers take to heart.

"17. But Mr. Benthall's cry is one that will be raised in the streets, on platforms, in the press, and in the Council if prices go down much further. It, therefore, has to be examined ..... We have a series of graphs showing raw and manufactured jute prices. These graphs show extraordinary variations, and I contend that it is impossible for any body of businessmen, economists, mathematicians, I almost added magicians, to control either raw or manufactured jute prices so that the one shall hear definite ratio to the other.

"18. The next point that I wish to make is that the request of the IJMA implies that, as there is to be some sort of correlation between the prices of locally manufactured and raw jute, it will become the duty of Government to see that, as the ryot must be protected, so also must be the manufacturer. The simple method desired at present is restriction of production by means of prescribed working hours dictated by the Association.... Government would be forced into the position of an arbitrator of the price of jute manufacture in Bengal, or, what is the same thing, the ratio between it and the price of raw jute. What would this imply?

"19. It would mean... that Government would have to be in a better position to guage the jute market than the jute trade itself.... The proposal, in short, would transfer from the industry to Government the onus of all the mistakes of the industry, with no corresponding gain.

"22. I now come to the case of the three outside mills. My sympathies are entirely with them. They are attempting to do their best, within the law, to earn a rerturn on their capital.... Soon after their investment was made, trade conditions deteriorated. They could not make money under the Association rules; they

therefore had to resign and make their own policy. They had no reserves, no specific standing for the purposes of credit....

"23. It is not necessary to go into details regarding these reserves. A mere glance at the jute mill list in any trade paper will show the sharp division between pre-war and post-war mills. The pre-war mills have built up enormous reserves—no industry in the world can compare with them. Take ten pre-war mills, at random—

Paid up ordinary capital Reserve and other funds

	Rs.	*Rs.*
Anglo India	4920700	21450000
Kinnison	1500000	12287807
Standard	1400000	6143869
Hooghly	420000	3478570
Kamarhatty	2400000	11946510
Belvedere	400000	6201264
Budge Budge	1800000	9278878
Kelvin	700000	7678400
Reliance	1650000	9341131
Dalhousie	1500000	6942543
Then take up two of the outside mills—		
Adamjee	30000000	781428
Agarpara	1500000	522620

"24. Then take the dividends paid since 1926 by these mills (From *Commerce* March 20th)

	1926	*1927*	*1928*	*1929*	*1930*	*1931*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
Anglo India	30	52.5	65	47.5	20	7.5
Kinnison	90	140	130	90	50	15.0
Standard	45	70	55	35	22.5	7.5
Hooghly	80	100	125	125	125	40.0
Kamarhatty	55	100	100	75	37.5	15.0
Belvedere	35	90	100	75	35	20.0
Budge Budge	38	70	90	60	27	20.0
Kelvin	60	85	125	110	50	25.0
Reliance	75	110	120	110	70	20.0
Dalhousie	45	80	77.5	52.5	35	10.0
And by Adamjee and Agarpara						
Adamjee	Nil	71/2	Nil	Nil		
Agarpara	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil		

"25. Many of the post-war mills have built up fair reserves though not to the same extent as pre-war mills. Thus take the following mills—

	Capital	*Reserves*
	Rs.	Rs.
Birla	2433600	4403293
Hukumchand	2903737	9455000
Megna	6123900	4247026
Craig	750000	1140000
Waverley	1250000	1610000
Nuddea	6679500	4802086

But the dividends have been on a very modest basis, mainly owing to over-capitalisation, in case of the mills built during the inflation period. The dividends from 1926 have been—

	1926	*1927*	*1928*	*1929*	*1930*	*1931*
Birla	5	10	15	15	10	2.5
Hukumchand	13.3	20	23.3	26.6	26.6	10
Megna	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Craig	Nil	Nil	Nil	2.5	Nil	Nil
Waverley	Nil	Nil	Nil	2.5	Nil	Nil
Nuddea	Nil	7.5	6.5	6	2	Nil

"26. As a matter of fact, the Indian Jute Mills Association is rather an unnatural association. On general grounds one might have expected a division of interests into pre-war and post-war but the truth is that the bigger brothers have carried the younger children on their backs. Thus, the pre-war Gourepore sponsored the post-war Nuddea, the pre-war India the post-war Megna, the pre-war Alliance, the post-war Craig was Waverley, the pre-war Ganges the post-war Bansberia. And the post-war Presidency which at first could not live under its creators went over to the care of an Association Managing Agent. Managing Agents have guided the jute mills policy, and while clearly shareholders would have benefited in many cases by independent policy, the Managing Agents, in the interests of the older mills, could not countenance such a policy in the case of the newer mills. But the later Indian investors had no such trammels. They were bound by the interests of their own mills and in considering these alone they have ventured on the plicy of the pirate bus.

"27. ... Are not the resources of the jute manufacturing industry sufficient to regulate their relations with 'pirates' without Government intervention? The 'pirate' looms number 1650 against 57500. Surely, there is something wrong when such a pre-pondering majority cannot bring the minority to terms. But here again I am suspicious, for in the interview with Mr. Marr just before he left (Mr. Woodhead was present) Mr. Benthall said the Bengal Chamber and IJMA were trying to get a united Association to come to Government with a request that for all time Government should regulate the working hours of the industry according to the unanimous dictates of the industry. This monstrous proposal is to be made as an amendment of the Factories Act, when it comes up for amendment this year. I can scarcely find words strong enough to condemn this policy. It is dishonest, grasping, and almost cynical in its disregard for the probity of Government.... Mr. Sime, in one of the interviews with Mr. Marr and myself, guaranteed that *any* legislation of this kind that was put up would go through. He even mentioned the instruments he would use, and I have little doubt if these instruments are used, the measure will go through. The jute industry may descend into the foulest depths to secure its ends, but I venture to plead that the Government of Bengal should make sure that it will give no encouragement to even the breath of intervention at this stage.

"28. ... Not only does the request of the Association imply that the all jute manufacturing interests in India should conform to their rules and regulations, but it also means that no further capital may be invested in this industry unless

the investors are willing to agree to the Association's terms.... The jute mill industry in India so far has enjoyed almost unique privileges in that it has not been disturbed by political factors . . . . but it seems to me that the Association, even with its Indian members, is now running the risk of creating a poltical division in the industry the repercussions of which may be much more vital than the temporary effect which the present so-called crisis may have on a few bazar dealers and a number of shareholders who may find it difficult to find further margin..." etc.

R.N. Gilchrist* 22.4.1934

"1. We have received the memorandum from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. It is practically the same as the draft Mr. Benthall gave to His Excellency in Calcutta.

"2. Mr. Gilchrist has also written a note on the subject which H.E. might like to read."

J.A. Woodhead+ 23.4.1932

"Seen. A powerful diatrive!"

J.Anderson++ 25.4.1932

* Economic Adviser to the Commerce Dept.
\+ Secretary, Commerce Dept.
++ Governor of Bengal.

REFERENCES

* This paper in its present form appears for the first time in this volume. Portions of sections III, IV and V as well as the Appendix had been prepared as an Occasional Paper at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta in 1981 and subsequently translated and published in German in Dietmar Rothermund, ed., *Die Peripherie in der Weltwirtschatskrise: Afrika, Asian and Lateinamerika 1929-1939*, Paderborn, 1983, pp. 171-96. Parts of sections I and II also appeared in mimeograph form in another Occasional Paper of the same series in 1982. No part of this paper has previously been published in English. All references to works which have appeared after 1982 have been incorporated in course of revising and updating this paper in its present form. I would like to express my thanks once again to Dr. Omkar Goswami for lending me his notes from the Benthall Papers at the Centre of South Asian Studies (CSAS), Cambridge, in 1980.

1. S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercialization in Eastern India" in Asok Sen, *et al.*, ed., *Three Studies in the Agrarian Structure of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1982, Charts II & III, pp. 266-7 and Appendix Tables 3.9, 3.9(a), pp. 314-5.
2. Ibid., p. 246, Table 8.
3. M.M. Islam, "Problems of Agricultural Indebtedness in British India: Reconstruction of some traditional views about its origin in the light of data from the Eastern Region" (unpublished paper, 1980).
4. This constitutes the period for M.M. Islam's empirical evidence. M.M. Islam, *Bengal Agriculture 1921-46*, 1st Indian edn, New Delhi, 1979.
5. S. Mukherji, "The Problem of Agricultural Marketable Surplus in Eastern india 1900-1921," paper presented at the XXIX International Congress of Orientalists, Paris, July 1976 and S. Mukherji, "Imperialism in Action through a Mercantilist Function", in Barun De *et al.*, ed., *Essays in Honour of Prof. S.C. Sarkar*, New Delhi, 1976, pp. 725-59.
6. S. Mukherji, "Agrarian Class Formation in Modern Bengal", *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 1985, pp. 11-27.

7. S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercializaion...", op. cit., pp. 255-60.
8. It is here that I disagree very fundamentally with Omkar Goswami, "Collaboration and Conflict: European and Indian Capitalists and the Jute Economy of Bengal, 1919-39", *IESHR*, XIX, 2 (April-June 1982), pp. 141-79; and "Then Came the Marwaris: Some Aspects of the Changes in the Pattern of Industrial Control in Eastern India", *IESHR*, XXII, 3 (July-September 1985), pp. 255-49.
9. B.N. Ganguly, *Reconstruction of India's Foreign Trade*, Delhi, 1946, p. 20.
10. It has been variously estimated that Britain's surplus balance with India covered between one-third and two-fifths of UK's deficit with other countries. For some latest estimates, see A.K. Banerji, *Aspects of Indo-British Economic Relations 1858-1898*, Bombay, 1982, pp. 9-49, 156-75. Also, A.K. Bagchi, *Private Investment in India 1900-1939*, 1st Indian edn, New Delhi, 1975, p. 420.
11. S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercializaion...", op. cit., p. 157. Also, A.K. Bagchi, *Private Investment*, pp. 81-2.
12. B.R. Tomlinson, *Political Economy of the Raj, 1914-1947: The Economics of Decolonizaion*, Cambridge, 1979, p. 12.
13. Ibid., p. 13.
14. Directorate of Commercial Intelligence, India, *Review of the Trade of India, 1906/07*, p. 36.
15. Loc. cit.
16. *Review of the Trade of India, 1908/09*, p. 48. Regarding rice jute substitution, see Mukherji, "Imperialism in Action...", op. cit., pp. 752-3, Table IX.
17. S. Mukherji, *Trade in Rice and Jute in Bengal: Its Effects in Prices, Cultivation and Consumption 1900/01-1920/21*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Jadavpur University, 1971, Table 4.3, ch. 4.
18. Ibid., Table 4.2. 19. Ibid., chs. 2 and 5. 20. *Review, 1908/09*, p. 46.
21. *Review, 1910/11*, pp. 46-7. Also Mukherji, *Trade in Rice and Jute in Bengal*, ch. 5.
22. *Review, 1912/15*, pp. 37-8.
23. Mukherji, *Trade in Rice and Jute in Bengal*, chs. 2 and 5.
24. Ibid., ch. 1. For developments in the twenties and thirties, Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercialisation...", op. cit., pp. 256-63.
25. Indian Central Jute Committee, *Report on the Merketing of Jute & Jute Products*, Calcutta, 2nd edn, 1952, *passim*.
26. Also Table 2.12, ch. 2, in Mukherji, *Trade in Rice and Jute in Bengal*.
27. *Review, 1917/18*, pp. 20-1. 28. *Review, 1918/19*, Introduction.
29. A. Dasgupta, "Jute Textile Industry" in V.B. Singh, ed., *Economic History of India, 1857-1956*, Delhi, 1965, 1975, reprint 1983, p. 265.
30. S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercializaion...", op. cit., p. 268.
31. Computed from *Statistical Abstract of British India* (different years) by A.K. Ghosh, *Prices and Economic Fluctuations in India 1861-1947*, Delhi, 1979, p. 54. It may be noted in this context that most economists and economic historians in India have held the view that there was no absolute decline in the level of industrial employment in India during the Depression.
32. Morris D. Morris, "The Growth of Large Scale Industry" in *CEHI*, II, Cambridge, Table 7.15, p. 613.
33. A.K. Ghosh, loc. cit.
34. This, for instance, is the main thrust of argument in Lan Drummond's book *Imperial Economic Policy of 1917- 39: Studies in Expansion and Protecion*, London, 1974.
35. B.R. Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj*, pp. 157-67.
36. Ibid., pp. 45-7 and *passim*.
37. B.R. Tomlinson, "Colonial Firms and the Decline of Colonialism in Eastern India 1914/47", *Modern Asian Studies*, XV, pt. 3, July 1981, p. 486.

38. For a detailed discussion on the various means of controlling raw jute supply adopted by the IJMA like building up stocks, use of jute forecasts, depreciating price through quality marks, etc. See S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercialization...", op. cit., pp. 248-58.
39. Ibid., pp. 255-8. This happened particularly in the case of rice.
40. Dietmar Rothermund, "British Foreign Trade Policy in India during the great Depression 1929-39" and "The Great Depression and British Financial Policy in India 1929-34" in *The Indian Economy under British Rule*, Delhi, 1983, pp. 152-210, and Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj*, pp. 35-47, 73-92 and also Tomlinson, "Britain and the Indian Currency Crisis 1930-32", *Economic History Review*, XXXII, no. 1 (February 1979) provide some of the recent analysis of these problems. For earlier and useful concise accounts, see M.D. Joshi, "Currency" and R.L. Varshney, "Foreign Trade" in V.B. Singh, ed., op. cit., pp. 375-413, 444-84.
41. Even before India started selling gold in the international market, the Government of India began selling silver from around 1927 after melting down old coins returned to it. This was done when the price of silver was low, and it further depressed the price, thus depreciating the savings of the Indian masses. Rothermund, op. cit., pp. 175-210.
42. Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj*, pp. 37-39.
43. Of these, the cotton textiles and sugar mills industries were clearly the developing ones, receiving 'discriminating protection'.
44. Calculated from figures given in Rothermund, op. cit., pp. 175-210.
45. West Bengal State Archives (WBSA), Govt. of Bengal, Commerce & Labour Department (Commerce Branch), File 1T-15, Progs. B236 and 223-34, April 1936. From Secretary, Indian Chamber of Commerce to the Secretary, Commerce Department, Govt. of Bengal, 18 August 1936. A summary of the main points and arguments of this note is given in S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercialization...", op. cit., p. 279.
46. While the preference given to Indian exports to the British market (mostly raw materials) did not register any increase that was not commensurate with the normal growth in demand, as many as 162 items of British exports into India received preference. See Rothermund, op. cit.; also "The Great Depression and British Financial Policy". For the specific case of cotton, see B. Chatterji, "Business and Politics in the 1930s: Lancashire and the Making of the Indo-British Trade Agreement, 1939", *Modern Asian Studies*, XV, pt. 3, July 1981, pp. 487-526. As regards the decline in India's export surplus in general and in export surplus in relation to non-empire countries, Varshney, op. cit., pp. 460-1 points out: "Our heavy export surplus with countries outside the British Empire was reduced considerably from about Rs 100 crores in 1913-14 to Rs 6 crores in 1938-39 due to restrictive trade policy of the 1930s. The reduction in our export surplus in trade with countries outside the Empire was responsible for India's overall export surplus too. Yet even this small export surplus almost wholly accounted for India's net export surplus of Rs 17 crores in 1938-39".
47. Rothermund, op. cit., pp. 175-210.
48. For a discussion on the actual course of such developments, see S. Mukherji, "Agricultural Class Formation in Modern Bengal", op. cit., pp. 11-27.
49. On the nature of this 'crisis', see S. Mukherji, "Some Aspets of Commercialization...", op. cit., pp. 248-9.
50. A fairly detailed account of these events is given in A.K. Bagchi, *Private Investment in India 1900-39*, pp. 229-83.
51. S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercialization...", op. cit., pp. 241-4.
52. CSAS, Benthall Papers (hereafter BP), Box IX, File 2A, 'Sir E.C. Benthall Indian Correspondence, 1935 (from 24 September to November, 1935). Letter to A. Logie, gunny broker in USA from A. McKerrow, Bird & Co., dated 14.11.1935.
53. The formation of the IJMA in 1884 was, however, dictated by the need to curtail output and check undue competition so that supply did not exceed demand.
54. Tables 3 and 4, above.

55. WBSA, Government of Bengal, Commerce Department, File 1F-9, Progs. 26168B, January 1929. (Control of shifts in jute mills) from Secretary, Bengal Chamber of Commerce to Secretary, Government of Bengal, Commerce Department, no. 2933-1927, Calcutta, 30 September, 1927. "...There is no country in the world where a shift system is illegal...."
"While therefore, this chamber is, as it has always been, solicitous for the welfare of the workers, the Committee cannot agree that it is right that government should dictate to an industry that it shall restrict the hours of working its machinery, to eleven hours per day, thus handicapping it against its competitors in other countries by withholding from it the right to expand production, *when the conditions of industry are favourable*". (emphasis added)
56. Bagchi, op. cit., pp. 281-82.
57. WBSA, Government of Bengal, Commerce Department (Commerce Branch) File 2J-1, Progs. 87-134B, September 1932.
58. Loc. cit. From President, Calcutta Stock Exchange Ltd. to Secretary, Government of Bengal Commerce Dept. Calcutta, 8 March, 1932 (Progs. 88B).
59. Loc. cit. From Secretary, Bengal Chamber of Commerce to the Secretary, Commerce Department no. 1407-1932, Calcutta, 21 April 1932 (Progs. 94B.)
60. There was also a representation along the same lines from the Bengal Shareholder's Association.
61. Loc. cit. From Hon. Secretary, Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to the Secretary, Commerce Department no. G.I./1OG Calcutta, 9 May 1932 (Progs. 106B).
62. Excerpts From this note are reproduced in the Appendix to this paper.
63. It appears that Benthall had first drafted a memorandum for the Governor of Bengal which was reproduced, in almost identical form as the representation of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to the Government of Bengal. See appendix, forwarding note by J.A. Woodhead.
64. For a detailed discussion on this point, S.Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercialization...", op. cit., pp. 244-7, 251-4.
65. Another method of reducing factor costs was by cutting down the wage bill of the jute mills—there was a decline in jute mill workers' wages by 10-15% (A. Dasgupta, "Jute Textile Industry" in V.B. Singh, op. cit., p. 271). Benthall predicted widespread unemployment for jute labour (BCC, para 7).
66. In this connection, also see *supra* Table 5.
67. The practice of cheating the cultivators by the 'standard of the mark' was also raised. For further details, S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercializaion...", op. cit., p. 253.
68. Tomlinson, "Colonial Firms and Decline of Colonialism", op. cit., p. 474. "...but by the 1930s the vast majority of expatriates—Benthall excluded—saw a continuation of control as their only hope". It appears, however, that Benthall was consistently against intervention from 1935 at the latest.
69. CSAS, BP, 'Indian Correspondence June-September 1935'. Box X, Confidential memo to IJMA members from EC Benthall, Calcutta, 29.6.1935.
70. Loc. cit. "...a Government, which once had got a taste for regulating what they would regard as a 'foreign' industry, may intervene further".
71. Loc. cit.
72. Loc. cit. And again, "...make it quite clear to our Directors and to the public that if the outside mills want to fight, we are quite, prepared for it. Only by the utmost firmness at this stage can we make them realise that this time we mean business". E.C.
73. Tomlinson, "Colonial Firms...", op. cit., p. 472, n. 53 gives no instance where it appears that Morton was already of the same opinion as Benthall in 1935.
74. "As I see it we have tried an experiment and failed... If we are prepared to continue any form of short term agreement it can only be provided if we have adequate protection either in the form of a guarantee from Government or in the form of a guarantee amongst ourselves to break prices at the first threat of building or extension by outsiders.... Doing it with

suitable Government protection will mean that we shall be able to achieve our desires without heavy losses..." G.B. Morton to E.C. Benthall, 16.9.1935, Box X.

75. Letters from G.B. Morton to E.C. Benthall, 20.9.1935, 5.10.1935 and 1.11.1935, Box X.
76. From E.C. Benthall to A. Mckerrow, 29.10.1935, Box IX.

77.

IJMA Mills

Groups/ Mills	*Profit on Sales (per cent)*	*Groups/ Mills*	*Profit on Sales (per cent)*
Jardine		Standard	10.4
Howrah	15.9	Union	5.3
Kamarhatty	14.6		
Kankinarrah	17.4	**Andrew Yule**	
Reliance	22.0	Albion	7.6
		Belvedere	11.7
Bird-Heilgers		Budge Budge	7.7
Auckland	6.7	Orient	12.6
Caledonian	12.7		
Cheviot	10.9	**Barry & Others**	
Delta	9.8	India	11.6+
Lothian	5.0	Megna	7.3+
National	16.3	Ganges	6+
New Central	11.5	Nuddea	6.2+
Clive	6.5	Gowrepore	14.0+
Dalhousie	12.6		
Kinnison	11.9	**Outside Mills**	
Lansdowne	3.7	Premchand	22.5
Lawrence	11.2	Agarpara	19.4
Naihati	8.7+	Adamjee	15.3
Northbrook	11.3	Calcutta	14.6

\+ Full figures not available. Figures based on 6 previous half year reports (i.e., 1933-35). In each case, interest, income tax and depreciation included to make figures comparable. Memo to E.C. Benthall from G.B. Morton 23.8.1935 (annexure). Box X.

78. Loc. cit. 79. Ibid. 80. Ibid.
81. Tomlinson, "Colonial Firms...", op. cit., p. 468.
82. Thus, from one letter, E.C. Benthall to P.Hoorder, 18.7.1935 Box X, we get (a) "[Surajmul Nagarmull] also undoubtedly made great use of phutka—a transaction to which we tumbled or at any rate *turned to* rather late" (emphasis added). (b) "... we have more or less proved that by means of phutka transactions we could hold our own with our friends". (c) "We hope that the phutka transactions will enable us to run a larger book especially in Firsts". Again, in 1937, Cable from Bird's Calcutta to E.C. Benthall, 27.8.1937 "we have covered 2500 bales phutka", and cable, 4.12.1937 "we have sold 1000 Bales Futka". Box XIV.
83. "My own feeling is that even if all the outside mills come to us now and agree to enter into an agreement on equal terms we should not agree. I think it is essential for some of them to go out of business before we even discuss a settlement". From G.B. Morton to E.C. Benthall, 14.12.1937, Box XIV.
84. From G.B. Morton to E.C. Benthall, 27.11.1937 (enclosure dated 30.11.1937), Box XIV.
85. From E.C. Benthall to G.B. Morton, 15.12.1937, Box XIV.
86. "As regards contingency reserves, your news is most unsatisfactory. It appears that the auditors are forcing us to deplete all our hidden reserves and I suppose that the next step

will be to make us disclose our jute reserves.... I note that in spending amounts covered by the reserves it will be in such a way that the expenses will appear as contingencies for which the reserves were provided; you will in fact be using these reserves in the same way as if you were drawing on the JM (jute mill) reserves, i.e. using them to improve our revenue accounts and not capital expenditure. In that way during the current bad year you will be able to help these mills show better results and yet keep your JM reserves intact". From E.C. Benthall to A.P. Benthall, 27.7.1937. "I am really sorry to see the auditors forcing us into exposure of our contingency reserves ... it is insane not to have secret reserves". From E.C. Benthall to A.P. Benthall, 17.8.1937, Box XIII.

87. " ... in order to absorb the labour from Lothian Mill which has been closed down for six months or more ... Andrew Yules have arranged to work an extra shift. This news pleases us as it means that Yules will not be able to find out the actual cost of working a whole mill 108 hours per week and so they will not discover what a profitable proposition double shift working is when circumstances make such working possible. We are anxious that others shall not find this out, and imitate our policy in Union South". From A.P. Benthall to E.C. Benthall, 27.10.1937, Box XIV.
88. Also, Table 8 in my "Some Aspects of Commercialization... ", op. cit., p. 248.
89. Ibid., Tables 13, 13a, 14 and 15, chart III and Appendix Tables 9, 9a.
90. Government of Bengal: *Report of the Bengal Jute Enquiry Committee, 1934*, Calcutta 1935, Vol. II (Evidence). "Note from the Indian Chamber of Commerce dated 29 March 1933," pp.186-88. According to IJMA's own accounts of stocks, the mill stocks at the end of each financial year from 1926/27 to 1935/36 clearly showed an increase during the first half of the 30s.

Year	*Mill stocks (000 bales)*
1926/27	3400
1927/28	3850
1928/29	3800
1929/30	3450
1930/31	5550
1931/32	4350
1932/33	4800
1933/34	4750
1934/35	5188
1935/36	4187

91. S. Mukherji, "Some Aspects of Commercialization ...", op. cit., chart III.
92. Ibid., Table 14.
93. WBSA, Government of Bengal, Proceedings of the Commerce Department, File 2-E-3, July 1931, Progs.B 14, Appendix C.
94. S. Mukherji, "Agricultural Class Formation...", op. cit., pp. 11- 24. See also, Karunamoy Mukherji, *The Problems of Land Transfer*, Santiniketan, 1957, specially chs. 3, 5 and 8; B.B. Chaudhari, "The Process of Depeasantization in Bengal and Bihar 1885-1947", *IHR*, II, no.1, July 1975, pp.105-65; Partha Chatterjee, "Agrarian Structure in Pre-Partition Bengal" in Asok Sen, et al., op. cit., pp. 113-224.

22

Religious Nationalism in Colonial India

J.S. GREWAL

Jawaharlal Nehru used the phrase 'religious nationalism' for a phenomenon in colonial India which combined religious fervour with patriotism. It was obviously not his kind of nationalism, but it was quite a widespread phenomenon in India under colonial rule, embracing not one but all the major religious communities of the subcontinent. This phenomenon demands serious attention from the social scientist who wishes to grapple with the nature of nationalism in India before Independence.

Nationalism was a phenomenon that emerged in India during the colonial period. It is possible to see some relevance of the earlier historical background, but to make too much of that background would be to miss the crucial significance of the situation created by the British rule in India. One way to underline this significance is to trace the changing connotation of the word *qaum* in northern India. As a graduate student I heard a friend talking about some illiterate character referring to the women as a *qaum*. I was expected to treat it as a joke, and I did. As a researcher, much later, I came upon some official documents of the Mughal times in which the term *qaum* was used for masons, goldsmiths and the like. I realized before long that *qaum* in Mughal times was a social category. It was only during the period of colonial rule that it became a political category when *qaum*, with all its derivatives, came to be equated not only with 'community' but also with 'nation'.

The difference in secular and religious nationalism lay in the basis for politicalization. For Jawaharlal Nehru as the leader of the Indian National Congress religious identity could never be the basis of nationalism and ought not to be the basis of politics. In any case, the membership of the Congress was open to all Indians irrespective of their caste, creed or sex; also, the ideal of the Congress was to concern itself with the vital politics of the entire country. Whatever the religious views and feelings of its individual members, the public stance of the Congress was generally secular as well as national. The All India Muslim League too was concerned with politics, but its membership was confined to Muslims and it gave primacy to the concerns of the community. Within four decades of its history, the leaders of the League had begun to claim a distinct nationality for Muslims in India on the argument that they belonged to a distinct culture. The essential ingredient of this culture was religion. The basis of their polity, professedly, was religious identity.

However, the Congress was not the only representative of secular nationalism in colonial India, nor was the Muslim League the only representative of religious nationalism. More significantly, religious nationalism did not inevitably lead to political separation. Some eminent leaders of the country talked of 'Hindu' rather than Indian nationalism: the Hindu Mahasabha became the counterpart of the All India Muslim League. But the Hindu Mahasabha stood for the unity (*akhaṇḍita*) of the subcontinent. The idea shared by all the protagonists of religious nationalism was that cultural identity based on religion should be the basis of polity. That was why some of our well-meaning nationalists too went officiously in search of 'unity in diversity' to give support to Indian nationalism which could stand firmly on its own two feet of secularism and territoriality. In any case, in the eyes of the protagonists of religious nationalism the questions of language and script too acquired enormous importance as the necessary adjuncts of cultural identity.

Undoubtedly a pan-Indian phenomenon, religious nationalism gained a peculiar importance in the Punjab because of the presence of three religious communities in this region. The social configuration of the Punjab during the nineteenth century and the differences of historical background introduced the differences of detail, but the similarities remain more striking. What was true of one community was true of the others with only slight modifications. That is one reason why I propose to talk only about one of them, the Sikhs on whom I have consulted more evidence than on the other Punjabis.

II

In 1940, a pamphlet was published under the title *Khalistan*, advocating the formation of a state in which the proportion of Sikh population and the share of the Sikhs in political power should be greater than what it was in the British Punjab. This pamphlet was written in reaction to the Lahore Resolution of the All India Muslim League, known generally as the Pakistan Resolution. The *Khalistan* was meant to oppose the idea of Pakistan. Nevertheless, it did reflect the concern of a section of the Sikhs for their position in a free subcontinent.

In 1943, this concern was expressed more clearly in a booklet entitled *Azad Punjab* in which the idea of conceding Pakistan was denounced and it was argued that the best solution of the political impasse in the country was to concede the demand for a province in which the Sikhs should form 20 per cent of the population, and Hindus and Muslims should form 40 per cent each, so that each community could be free (*azad*) of any fear of domination by the others. Assuming that free India would be a federation, the position of a community within a province or a state appeared to matter more than anything else. The communitarian concerns were taken for granted. In fact the distinct cultural identity of the Sikhs and their importance as a community was underlined in this booklet to argue that they deserved adequate share in political power to safeguard both. The assumption that the Sikhs formed a distinct political community with the right to enjoy a certain degree of political power was

reflected also in books written in support of a Sikh homeland or a Sikh state in 1946.

Not all the Sikhs subscribed to these ideas. It is necessary, therefore, to identify those who did. In the early 1940s, Sikh leadership was formally represented by three political parties (if we choose to leave out the leaders of the left whose numerical strength was rather small). These three political parties were: the Unionists, the Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal. It is not easy to draw a clear line of demarcation on the point at issue, but on the whole the leaders of the Akali Dal much more than the others gave primacy to communitarian interests and spearheaded the movement for constitutional safeguards for the Sikhs on the assumption that they formed a distinct political community. They fought the elections of 1946 on the issue of Pakistan, projecting their preference for a united India in the interest of the community. They emerged as the largest party among the Sikhs in terms of the members elected. Obviously, Sikh 'nationalism' for them did not stand for separatism. They claimed nonetheless to be the sole representatives of the Sikh Panth, that is Sikh *qaum*. This concept had little to do with the politics of the Muslim League. It was there in fact before the Akalis appeared on the historical scene.

What brought the Akalis into prominence was the politics of the Unionists and the Indian National Congress. In 1919, a new political party called the Central Sikh League was formed with the blessings of the Congress leaders. One of the objectives of this new party was to liberate the *gurdwaras* associated with the Sikh Gurus from the control of the *mahants* who had been made hereditary by the British and who were staunch supporters of the government. The Golden Temple at Amritsar was indirectly controlled by the British administrators. The movement for the control of *gurdwaras* was thus bound to be anti-British. While its leaders looked upon it as a prelude to the liberation of the country, the leaders of the Indian National Congress, including Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, supported it as a movement against the British. A new organization was created for the management of the *gurdwaras* taken over from the *mahants*, and another organization was created to take over the *gurdwaras* through direct action. The former was known as the Shiromani Akali Dal. In 1925, when the Sikh Gurdwaras Act was passed, the Shri Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee became a legally recognized constitutional body. The leaders of the Shiromani Akali Dal had already turned to politics in general, like the leaders of the Central Sikh League.

The differences between the Akali and Central Sikh League leaders surfaced clearly on the issue of the Moti Lal Nehru Report. Whereas some of the Central Sikh Leaguers were in favour of accepting the Report, the Akalis insisted on its rejection because it did not contain any constitutional safeguards for the Sikhs. Baba Kharak Singh, the most important leader of the Central Sikh League, rejected the Report on altogether different grounds: its objective was merely 'dominion status' and not 'complete freedom'. In the Lahore session of the Congress in 1929, the objective of dominion status was dropped in favour of complete independence, and an assurance was held out to the 'minorities',

including the Sikhs, that no future constitution for India would be acceptable to the Congress without their consent. The Akalis joined the Congress to celebrate 26 January 1930 as the 'Independence Day', and associated themselves with the Congress during the Round Table Conferences.

The failure of the Round Table Conferences and Ramsay MacDonald's 'communal award' which reinforced separate electorates and weightage and added a large measure of autonomy for the provinces, strained the relations of the Akalis with the Congress. Whereas the Akalis were totally opposed to the award, the Congress remained rather neutral towards it. The leaders of the Central Sikh League joined the Akalis in opposing the award, so much so that the Sikh League was merged with the Sikh Pratinidhi Board which was meant to be the common organization of all the Sikhs. The Board failed in its objective and it was dissolved. The Central Sikh League vanished in this process. The Akalis fought the elections of 1937 with considerable success. Some of the former leaders of the Central Sikh League joined the Congress. Thus, by 1937 the line between the leaders of the Sikh Panth and the supporters of Indian nationalism among the Sikhs was a little more clearly drawn. The greater success of the Akalis against the Congressite Sikhs in the elections of 1946 may be seen as the triumph of Sikh nationalism. As we observed earlier, Sikh nationalism and Indian nationalism were not seen as mutually exclusive by the leaders of the Akali Dal. In fact they worked rather closely with the leaders of the Congress on the eve of Independence.

III

The developments of the 1920s and the 1930s explain the emergence of the Akalis as the upholders of Sikh nationalism, but not the consciousness of a distinct identity among the Sikhs. For the latter, we have to go further back into the colonial period. The Anand Marriage Act, for instance, which imparted legal validity to the 'Sikh' rite of marriage, had been passed in 1909. After the Government of India Act of 1909, which gave separate electorate to Muslims, and particularly after the Lucknow Pact, which embodied the consent of the Indian National Congress to separate electorates and weightage for Muslims, the leaders of the Sikhs had begun to demand separate representation. The classic statement of Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha on a separate identity of the Sikhs had been published before the close of the nineteenth century under the title *Ham Hindu Nahin*. Criticism of the management of the *gurdwaras* too had started in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In the opening decade of the twentieth century the idea that the Sikh *gurdwaras* should be managed by the representatives of the Panth had begun to take the form of a journalistic and literary propaganda. Something important had happened, thus, before the end of the nineteenth century.

This 'something' was nothing short of a thorough religious reform advocated by associations known as Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Diwans. They sought to redefine Sikh faith, showed great concern for conformity, gave primacy to the

Singh or Khalsa identity, advocated the adoption of Sikh rites of passage, revived the doctrine of Guru-Panth, explicitly equated the *Adi Granth* with the Guru, took active interest in Sikh education, popularized their own understanding of Sikh religious literature and their own perception of Sikh history, showed great concern for Punjabi in Gurumukhi script, evinced interest in numbers, and sought to underline the importance of the Sikh past. All this made for a consciousness of distinct identity in social and cultural terms. In the growing politicization of the country during the twentieth century it was this socio-cultural entity that became the basis of a demand for the recognition of the Sikh Panth as a political identity.

Was the idea of a distinct cultural identity of the Sikhs an invention of the Singh reformers of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century? Many of their contemporary Sikhs answered this question in the affirmative. Many more of their contemporary Hindus asserted with great vehemence that Sikhs were 'Hindu'. The debate has gone on for nearly a century by now, and not a few historians have joined in from time to time. It is necessary, therefore, to go into the pre-colonial legacy of the Sikhs to be clear on this point.

IV

Guru Nanak's rejection of the existing systems of religious beliefs and practices prepared the ground for a new path in which congregational worship based on his own compositions and community meal based on his idea of equality resulted in the formation of a new religious group. The number of those who followed the path of Guru Nanak, known significantly as the Nanak-Panthis, began to increase under his successors. The places of congregational worship (*dharmśālās*) with community kitchens (*langar*) multiplied under the Gurus's representatives (*masands*). With contributions made by the followers in cash, kind and service, considerably large projects were undertaken and completed by the Gurus, resulting in sacred places and townships. The compositions of the Gurus and other compositions approved by them were compiled, resulting eventually in the compilation of *Granth Sahib* as an authoritative scripture. Some distinctly Sikh social ceremonies were adopted by the Gurus and their followers. By the early seventeenth century, the Sikhs had become conscious of the distinct identity of the Panth of Guru Nanak, and outside observers too had begun to look upon the Sikhs as distinct from both Muslims and Hindus.

The distinct socio-religious identity of the Sikhs was reinforced by Guru Gobind Singh when he instituted the Khalsa towards the end of the seventeenth century. His Khalsa were directly linked with him. The claims of other 'gurus' and the mediacy of the *masands* were set aside. The Khalsa were also to be prepared for meeting external interference in the affairs of the Guru and his followers. Initiated into the Khalsa order through a new ceremony of baptism (*khande ki pahul*), the Sikhs were to add the epithet Singh to their names, they were to keep their hair uncut, and they were to wear arms. A new purpose, a new appearance and a new sense of unity were added to the old consciousness of a distinctive identity.

This compact egalitarian order waged a long struggle against contemporary rulers during the eighteenth century and eventually succeeded in establishing their own power over a large part of the Punjab. The inscriptions on their coins attributed their success to the grace of God through Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. The belief that the Khalsa were meant to be sovereign (*rāj karegā khālsā*) was incorporated in the Khalsa anthem recited after every congregational prayer (*ardās*). The belief that personal Guruship had ended after the death of Guru Gobind Singh was given the form of two related doctrines: the doctrine of Guru-Panth, or the doctrine that Guruship henceforth was vested in the entire Panth; and the doctrine of *Gurugranth*, or the doctrine that Guruship henceforth was vested in the *bānī*. The Guru could be seen in the visible form of the Khalsa and his voice could be heard through the *bānī*. The authority of the scriptures and of the collectivity of the Sikhs was thus sought to be firmly established.

With the increasing social differentiation among the Sikhs during the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, there was little concern for orthodoxy or conformity. Though the Singh component of the Sikh community was still the dominant component, the membership of the Panth was not confined to the Singhs. The number and proportion of the *sahajdhārī* Sikhs was quite considerable. Some of them were lavishly patronized by the Sikh rulers. Their 'unorthodox' or even 'heterodox' ideas and practices could be covered by the veneration they showed for the Sikh scriptures and the Sikh Gurus . With a rapid increase in numbers and a gradual decrease in religious fervour, brāhmaṇical rites and ceremonies were either kept up, or added to Sikh ceremonies. Significantly, the ideas of reform in belief and practice during the early nineteenth century came from *sahajdhārī* Sikhs rather than the Singhs. Baba Ram Singh was the first reformer to emphasize the importance of the Singh identity, but even Baba Ram Singh believed in the Goddess in spite of the *'Gurugranth'*.

The pre-colonial Sikh tradition on the whole had many strands. To those among the Sikhs who liked to retain what was there in empirical existence during the late nineteenth century, the ideas advocated by the Singh reformers appeared to be an innovation. The Singh reformers themselves believed that they were advocating only what was once there in the past, particularly in the time of the Gurus. Religious scriptures provided the ideals against which the prevailing beliefs and practices could be judged as right or erroneous. The Singh reformers had to reinterpret the scriptures and had to be selective in their interpretation of the Sikh past. This is precisely what is involved in all religious reform. Reinterpretation of a past tradition is not an invention of the past. The more relevant question, therefore, relates to the nature of reinterpretation and the historical situation which makes it meaningful in the eyes of those who reinterpret. In other words, what was there in the historical situation created by the colonial rule that made for communitarian consciousness among the Sikhs, or among Hindus and Muslims?

V

Colonial rule in the Punjab, as in the rest of the country, brought with it a new administrative system, a new kind of education, a new legal system, new means of communication and transportation, the printing press, and an economic policy which resulted in greater exploitation of resources leading to increased agricultural production and trade. The Punjab under colonial rule witnessed an unprecedented social mobility and social change marked chiefly by the emergence of a middle class which cannot be understood without reference to the proliferation of government departments which required literate or educated personnel, the diversification of occupations due to technological and administrative changes, the new professions of law, education, medicine, engineering and journalism, and the commercialization of agriculture. The aspirations of this new middle class for jobs, wealth and power increased with their increasing importance. The British rulers, quite apart from any conscious policy of divide-and-rule, unconsciously thought in terms of religious communities, which obliged the ruled also to think in terms of religious communities. The British administrators professed to be impartial between the different communities, which induced the members of the different communities to present their case on behalf of their respective communities.

Had only the British administrators come to the Punjab, the response of the Punjabis would have been mildly communitarian. But the administrators did not come alone to represent western culture. In their wake came the Christian missionaries. In the nineteenth century their attitude was rather aggressive, and they denounced almost everything in the religious traditions of India to pave the way for the introduction of Christianity in the Punjab, as elsewhere in the country. Their presence and their success provoked a strong reaction which expressed itself, among other things, in socio-religious reform. Numbers began to count not only because of the aspiration for jobs, census returns or humanitarian or democratic ideas, but also because of the universal concern for the souls of men. The socio-religious reform of the late nineteenth century proved to be more aggressive and less tolerant than the reform of the early nineteenth century. It added an important dimension to communitarian consciousness, resulting in almost a new cultural orientation. In due course, the middle class in the Punjab came to be divided into middle classes with different ideologies, each comprehensive enough to embrace the religious, social, cultural and temporal concerns of a community. The British policy of constitutional separatism during the twentieth century was welcome to its beneficiaries and made constitutional safeguards the current idiom of politics.

The Indian National Congress, the party which represented secular nationalism to a greater degree than perhaps any other party, was not alien to the idiom of constitutional safeguards. Losing ground to the All India Muslim League, inch by inch, in an effort at accommodation, the Congress found itself reconciled to a loose federation first and then to the partition of the country. It was in this context that Jawaharlal Nehru talked of an area in the north in which the Sikhs may breath the air of freedom. In his mind too at that time the upholders

of religious nationalism were equated with the whole community of the Sikhs. Secular and religious nationalism were not mutually exclusive but mutually interactive before Independence. Given the historical situation of colonial rule, it became increasingly difficult for the religious communities to forget their numbers. Individuals became caught up in collective consciousness. This legacy of the colonial rule is still with us.

23

Unity/Diversity: An Aspect of the Construction of Indian National Ideology

BARUN DE

1. *Premises*[1]

Somewhat less than thirty years ago, I had the privilege of participating in a class that Professor R.S. Sharma took for a few of Indian historical research workers in London, in which he elucidated the class character of the nationalist reconstruction of ancient Indian historical trends, the way in which it represented an anti-colonial broad front of middle class ideology, exemplifying his point by a reference to K.P. Jayaswal who reproduced in his own nationalist way, what Europeans had been used to think were their own specifically European values of political culture, and suggesting that these were ideological ways in which powder and shot could be provided for middle class political aspirations.

The point was one that he wrote about in his analysis of Hindu political thought and institutions. That was the first time I met someone, whose thesis on śūdras in ancient India and whose socio-political analyasis of the way in which Hindu idealism obscured the basic elements of the material conditions of the life and thought of the masses in the Indian subcontinent placed him in the company of Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya, Devraj Chanana, Bhupendranath Dutta and D.D. Kosambi. Before Professor Sharma wrote on the subject[2] of his London lecture, the point was one that Indian Marxists knew only from the excessively schematic polemics on bourgeois nationalist historiographical premises in the introductory chapter of S.A. Dange's tract on ancient culture in India.[3] Very few people in those days of the 1950s had studied the caustic though cryptic critiques of Dange's left militant petty bourgeois chauvinism, as well as of the chauvinistic inversion of British imperial ideology in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's volumes on the history and culture of the Indian people organized by K.M. Munshi and R.C. Majumdar, published in an Western Indian Indological journal by D.D. Kosambi.[4] Professor Sharma is as much a pioneer as our exemplar Kosambi in explicating the need for what today would be called "deconstruction of discourse" and what my generation, less technically oriented, saw as the unveiling of ideological premises at about the same time that there was a vogue for this in the English-speaking historiographical interface of the social sciences. That vogue was evidenced in the somewhat earlier writings of R.G. Collingwood and Sir Herbert Butterfield,[5] regarding the need for historical comprehension to be more self-conscious about the inevitability of subjectivity,

i.e., of bias, within historical explanation, about the need for scepticism about Ranke's claims in the previous century—repeated in India by historians like Jadunath Sarkar and R.C. Majumdar identifying "truth" with history. It is in that older Indian Marxist tradition of class-consciousness, the need to identify one's consciousness with the interests of the masses, and scepticism about national bourgeois "truth", rather than from any affinity with the Commonwealth studies in the "deconstruction" of Indian nationality, with which "subaltern" historiography is sometimes associated, that I present this paper.

I propose to deal with the way in which the richness of the manifold diversities which give colour to the fabric of Indian life, becomes subordinated to a monochromatic uniformity, if they are encompassed in twentieth century Indian nationalist centralism. To make the point in brief I shall deal with one text, which sums up the national centralist point of view, with which people as diverse as Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the ideologues of the modern Indian nation, were clearly in accord, though perhaps with varying qualifications. But before taking up the text, I propose to explicate the assumptions useful for its analysis.

2. *Social Specificity and Historiographical Construction*

During the last thirty years, scientifically predisposed historians like Kosambi, Niharranjan Ray, R.S. Sharma, Satish Chandra and Irfan Habib have popularized the notion that, as in all parts of the world, the socio-economic base of civilization is much more important for studying the content of Indian historical processes, than considerations of politics or simple culture. This historiographical approach—in keeping with the products of the neo-Stalinist approach to Marxian hermeneutics in Western Europe, or Japan, where they are most explicit—has another assumption. This is that history, whether Indian or European, has universal, i.e., the same, methodological principles or categories wherever it is studied, written, or made by people. Of course, in proportion to the extent that history can be a peripheral or central discipline of the social sciences, it does have certain universally tenable standards and criteria. Any professional historian anywhere is expected to speak of the sequential order of collation, verification, and corroboration of testimony, of the data-dependence, of the method to be used in analysing different types of source materials, and of the need for the final product to be tested by the critical approbation of a pear group, i.e., by appropriate review in learned and popular journals and an appreciative readership or audio-visual appeal. However, this universality cannot be extended to the even older Rankean orthodoxy, that History = Truth, meaning that truth is the same everywhere, that it is a reifiable concept with universal validity. Such excessive universalism turns its historian practitioners into the role of judges of absolute norms, poised at standards higher than practicable cultural relativism. Such historiographical practice can lead to abstract idealism, which is far from scientific construction of data for analysis.

Without making any concessions to idealistic premises about history being more of an art than a discipline, without any aspirations to scientific explanation,

and entirely the product of individual perceptions (an idealism which runs like a blue streak through the premises of E.M. Trevelyan, H.A.L. Fisher, Benedetto Croce, as well as Collingwood and Butterfield) it may still be granted that historical writing and reading represents the social construction of intellectual discourse about the specific past of diverse polities, economies, or societies, an intellectual discourse which is socially constructed out of contemporary dialogues of the present with the past. History at its best is the attempt to scientifically construct sets of views and values, which look at certain specific periods, called for that purpose the past. It is an intellectual construction firmly sited in the specific historian's present enquiry. This *construction* of a dialogue between hypotheses, questions and answers, bears the social imprint of the historian's own contemporaneity of the milieu and the contradictions in which her or his problems are formulated.[6]

Social specificity in its human, space, and time co-ordinates is what makes inevitable an element of particularity in all social sciences,—in economics or statistics, in geography, political science, social anthropology and sociology, no less than in history. It is what divests these disciplines of pretensions to abstraction or to absolutism with which each of them is sometimes invested by those of epistemological persuasion. It is a potent force for keeping the historical discipline protected from post-Hegelian trivialities in which studies of social inversion and revolt by neo-Marxist scholars have recently proliferated. The emphasis on social specificity leads to historiography proper, not to just abstractions of method, but rather to enquiry into the cultural and intellectual milieu within which history seeks to recreate past polities, economies or civilizations.

To take an instance, historical universalism often imputes individualism, supposed to run through European historical development from ancient Greek cultural developments onwards, extrapolated in a Eurocentric sort of way, to obscure the communal forms of rural *mores* of the civilizations which accreted in particular spots the famous monuments at Vidisha, Sanchi, Besuagar or Udayagiri, or the Konarak Temple, or the Khajuraho shrines, or the very many rock-cut shrines dedicated to local deities in the Indian coastal ranges all the way from Ajanta, Ellora, Karle, Kanheri and inner Goa to Bojannakonda near Visakhapatnam, and Mahabalipuram. Such extrapolation makes no more sense than the use of Western European norms to judge Maya, Aztec or Inca cultures in pre-colonial Mexico or Peru. Indian historiographic analysis, used to pseudo-sociological Eurocentric premises in U.S. or old Soviet methodological manuals, would do well to be more self-conscious about differences in intercultural or intersocial *mores* and the relatively different values of historians who reconstruct different comparisons which are used to describe particular cultures.

Such differences may be noted in a variety of distinctions. One of the oldest has been between "we" whose history is being written by ourselves and "they" with whom some ancestors or "we" ourselves may have been or are at present at variance. A well-known example is that of the early Greek historians. It can easily be quoted about Herodotus that his

> declared intention in writing his history was to preserve the memory of the past by putting on record the astonishing achievements both of our own and of the Asiatic peoples ... (and) to show how the two races came into conflict ... while proud to be a Greek ... (he) described the habits of foreign people with admirable detachment.

But Thucydides

> a generation younger than Herodotus ... (had) his gaze ... directed exclusively upon Greece, and more particularly, upon Athens. While admitting his ignorance of more ancient civilizations, he nevertheless regarded the Pelopponesian War as 'the greatest achievement yet known in human history'.[7]

This is what is today called historical anthropomorphical development. Anthropomorphism tunnels historical vision to one's own people or 'nation' (in the ethno-territorial sense, a sense prior to the modern bourgeois connotation of nation-state). But all historiography has not had anthropomorphism scored into its consciousness in the way that Graeco-Hellenistic civilization did. The relativist Marxian historian of science, Joseph Needham, for instance, starts his monumental project on *Science and Civilization in China* with a counterblast to anthropomorphic and ethnocentric individualism:

> the citizen of the world has to live with his fellow citizens, at the ever-narrowing range of the aerofoil and the radio-wave. He can only give them the understanding and the appreciation which they deserve if he knows the achievements of the sages and precursors of their culture as well as his own. We are living in the dawn of a new universalism, which, if humanity survives the dangers attendant on control by irresponsible men of sources of power hitherto unimaginable, will unite the working peoples of all races in community both catholic and co-operative.[8]

Needham juxtaposed "*Europeans*", viewing the effects of modern science and technology in the complete transformation of the habitable globe, tempted too often to say to themselves that after all, this began in Europe with Galileo and Vesalius and to conclude that Wisdom was born with us "in what he considers" a salutary correction of perspective *vis-a-vis* "a *Chinese* contribution to man's understanding of Nature and his control over it". He did ignore the point that in their excessive self-regard and self-superordination over neighbouring cultures, the Chinese were perhaps the mirror-image of Western Europeans to whom he merely juxtaposed them. But Needham was indeed drawn to the point we are considering that historical milieu and consequent achievements.

> perhaps depended ... upon factors of environment which did not, and could not, operate in other civilisations with a different geographical setting and the different social evolution which this implied.[9]

In the South Asian subcontinent at any rate historical anthropomorphism has hardly had the clout that it commands in Western or Chinese heartland public opinion. Indian historians have not often, before the development of their national movement in the nineteenth century, been much concerned with their own ethno-territorial locus *vis-a-vis* "others" in the world. In fact, as D.D. Kosambi noted about the same time that Needham penned the lines quoted above:

> ... the influence of Sātavāhana trade upon the Brahmin purāṇas appears in their extraordinary geographical knowledge buried under descriptions by gods and goddesses of supposedly imaginary regions. When J.H. Speke first discovered the sources of the Nile, he took with him a map drawn from the purāṇas, by Lieutenant Wilford of Bombay which turned out to represent the inner African local names with startling accuracy (vide *Asiatick Researches*, 3, 1801). This (had been) later dismissed by the author as his pandit's forgery *(Asiatick Researches*, 1805, though no credit had been given to the pandit in Wilford's earlier work) leaving the remarkable coincidence unexplained.... The purāṇa geography however makes a sad contrast with the clear Chinese itineraries and the still clearer descriptions by Arab travellers. A place had to be considered a sacred pilgrimage before the Brahmin would condescend to record it, hidden with a twisted name under thick encrustations of myth. In their search for such *tīrthas*, Indian (*sic*) (at various times) not only penetrated the jungles of Assam and the south, but also worshipped a natural gas flame at Baku. The impulse to explore, at a maximum during the Sātavāhana epoch, subsided as the rustic mentality grew with the number of villages. Pilgrimage and study of scriptures were about the only causes for travel not discouraged by full-blown 'Hinduism'.[10]

From the Gupta and early feudal periods onwards, "Hindu" consciousness became introverted and self-regarding; characteristics not to be found in the earlier Buddhist historiography of the *Mahāvaṃsa* and the *Tripiṭakas*. On that classical norm of introversion and sub-continental self-regard was superimposed, for at least six and a half centuries in north India, even more in Sindh, and two or three centuries less, south of the Deccan, the culture of Indo-Islam. The medieval perspective looked till the Mughal period intercontinentally between Mecca and the China Seas, along the shores of what, Kirti Chaudhuri has recently reminded us, Arab geographers initially called the sea of China.[11]

At the moment of the capitalist domination of South Asia, the conglomerate that was known to the Western world as "Indian culture" was more inclusive than exclusive. Immigrants who came into the subcontinent to settle for life, having sundered their connections with Turan, Iran, the Arab world of West Asia and East Africa or Yunnan—known as Ahoms in upper Assam, Parsees in Gujarat, Navaiyats (or "new comers"), i.e., Arabs in Konkan and the Karnataka, and Iranis and Turanis all over the Gangetic plains and the lower Deccan—were treated as part of the subcontinent, not aliens. It was not till the seventeenth century that Akbar's successors began to treat themselves as an elite, or rather

a *herrenvolk* poised above the indigenous Rajput-Afghan-*sayyid/shaikha zada* aristocracy and popular masses. The snobbish and caste-manipulating social alienation of Akbar's descendants in the seventeenth century was to be copied by the late eighteenth and nineteenth century British colonial aristocracy from the time of Cornwallis and his successors. Before that 'Yavana', 'Huna', 'Turuska' had been incorporated into the broad category of *mlecchas* who lived no doubt outside the social pale of caṇḍālas, śūdras, and 'respectable' lower castes but still as part of an indigenous ruling class, territorially divided into monarchies, principalities, or chieftaincies. Apart from ritual puristic purpose, the *mleccha* was not, what today in terms of modern nationality theory would be called, an alien. The old composite culture, at elite as well as popular levels, has many records in literature and popular religion, though it has been badly hurt by twentieth century communal ideology and the recent permissiveness of politicians to 'accords' with modern communalism.

Syncretism has always been a reference point for the historiography of the nation-state form in modern times of our social organization—a reference point for looking at ourselves and the world. Let us now consider the conceptualization of the forces which have been supposed to shape this syncretism, particularly in terms of a composite sub-continental political consciousness, and in terms of the part which allocation of weights to these forces have been held to have in the constitution of Indian modern national discourse. This conceptualization divides Indian integrity into two parts, unity and diversity and then proceeds to attach more weight to centralism on the part of the state form by linking it with unity.

3. *The Political Implications of the Concept of Fundamental Unity of India*

A strong assumption that centralism is a beneficial force for Indian social and economic relations is a standard reference point in Indian national discourse today. Even those who vote for diversities in political control at the Panchayat or the State level, as explicated by opposition or regional parties such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or the Akali Party (when that is allowed to appear before the hustings by powers that be in New Delhi) accept the need for firmness in unity of state power all over the Union. Forty-five years after transfer of political sovereignty from the British Crown-in-Parliament in 1947, it might appear that the tensions, which lead to this community of interest in national solidarity, are of recent development, and are posterior to the success of the national movement for liberation from the British rule. It is certain that the present tensions flow from exacerbation of feelings induced by feelings fanned in the last twenty-five years, i.e., the Indira Gandhi epoch and age of opposition to her, among specific religious or ethnic communities, or by political manouevres precipitated by irresponsibility among segments of the ruling elite, whether mainly in the Central Government, or in State-government opposition to the central party. But at a deeper, more root cause, level, the significance of these tensions lies in a dialectical relationship between the social circumstances

represented by old ideologies of centralism, and different forms of local reaction to the hegemony of such ideologies.

At grassroot levels, the feelings of solidarity are broader than merely those values to which the Indian central ruling class, expects loyalty. They are subcontinental, and go back to various socio-political structures in the historical past of the subcontinent. These include the interrelations of varieties of multi-sectarian religious observance; aesthetic and popular folkway social styles of behaviour; large and small market; caste and family networks which created the cultural geographical boundaries of social intercourse; and the similarities of what are technically known as the New Indo-Aryan and Dravidian, or more popularly, the Indian regional languages, with territorial contiguities and prox-imities among a network of ethnic groups who inhabit the sub-continental macro-region where these languages are spoken—from the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean, those two great maritime appendages of *al-Bahral-Hindī* as later Arab geographers called, what we follow them in calling, the Indian Ocean. Normally these structures are seen as forces of particularity, requiring *superior imposition* of political tendencies of integration by state power, central regulation, and dynastic consolidation of all the forces of social production and distribution, which then *come together* to form the deep structures of modern national consciousness in India.

It is also generally accepted that the clarification of this national consciousness is the dialectical product of contradictions between the diversities of Indian life, from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries on the one hand, and British colonialism on the other. The economic impact of British rule, differentially diffused through the subcontinent in this period, worked havoc on the socio-economic fabric of popular culture and also wreaked its will on the patterns of domination and subordination, particularly by means of middle class Westernization of consumer styles. The coagulation of anti-bodies in the colonial state form in the subcontinent led to the criticism of repressive forms of power and forces of production. This was expressed in the new Western ideology of grievance and protest, in terms of cultural and political concepts of renaissance and nationalism. To this extent, it is true, as Niharranjan Ray explicated, in what was one of his last books, that

> Nationalism in India of the nineteenth century ... was a direct outcome of the penetration of British political authority and colonial economy into our country and the slow and steady but inevitable transformation of our traditional social economy.[12]

The political ideas of unity and centralism as expressed in the development of Indian nationalism was indeed the product of a particular age, the age of bourgeois development in the womb of feudalism, lustily kicking to get out and take its place as an autonomous, growing organism.

Yet it should not be forgotten in any historiographical analysis of national-ism, as post-Independence historians of liberal or left persuasion often do, that

an Indology bred out of colonial development did impute this nationalism to forces of cultural unity, much older than the limited, dependent bourgeois development of modern India. Niharranjan Ray used to strongly disagree:

> Certain Indologists of our country have tried to show, vainly to my mind, that throughout India's historical past, the concept of nationalism of a sort was, in howsoever vague and rudimentary a form known to the people of India at any rate among the knowledgeable ones. I cannot persuade myself to agree with this hypothesis. True there was a general consciousness of a sort of geographical and cultural unity of the country despite countless differences and divergences. True also, that at least twice, before the British took over, two big and powerful political entities were evolved, which brought together by far the largest part of the country under one central political and administrative authority and in one common administrative system, both being however relatively short-lived. But Indian nationalism as we have known it from the days of Rammohun Roy, connoted much more than mere geographical and cultural unity more than mere indigenous empire-building of a sort.[13]

Before we dismiss such Indology out of court, it is educative to consider its premises. We may take, for instance, an eminent early Indologist, who put forward the terminology of "the fundamental unity of India", Radhakumud Mookerji, author of the famous origination of maritime history in India, *A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity from the Earliest Times*, and erstwhile Hem Chandra Basu Mallik Professor of Indian History at the National Council of Education, Bengal (later upgraded as Jadavpur University, Calcutta).

Radhakumud Mookerji was one of a group of strongly nationalist Indologues, who, angered at the British partition of the cultural entity of Bengal in 1905, had (under the initiative of men like Asutosh Chowdhury, Maharajah Manindra Nandy and Brajendra Kishore Roy Choudhuri, zamindar of Gouripur in Mymensingh or Hem Basu Mallik himself), formed the early set of students around Satish Mukherjee's Dawn Society, lecturing to break away students from Calcutta University at the National Council. This group emphasized the Hindu and Buddhist roots of national Indian culture. Radhakumud's colleague, the charismatic Benoy Sarkar wrote books like *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes*, *Love in Hindu Literature*, *The Folk Element in Hindu Culture*, *Hindu Achievements in Exact Science*, and *Hindu Art: Its Humanism and Modernism* all written between 1914 and 1920 (vide the 100th birth anniversary tribute to Sarkar "A High Priest of Nationalism and Teacher Extraordinaire," *The Telegraph Weekend Reading*,26 December 1987). This was the age of academic search for Hindu cultural achievements. Brajendranath Seal, King George V Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at Calcutta University, wrote *The Positive Sciences of the Hindus* and the great Professor of Chemistry at the University Science College, Prafulla Chandra Ray, wrote *The History of Hindu Chemistry*. Radhkumud's Preface notes that his brochure is based on an article which he contributed to the *Dawn and Dawn Society's Magazine* in January

1909. In its present form it was delivered as an address to the Calcutta University Institute in March (1919) under the presidency of Gooroodass Banerjee, ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University: and it was reproduced in the pages of the *Modern Review* for April.[14] He quoted his "deep" indebtedness to Brojendranath Seal for valuable suggestions and also thanked "the Hon. Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya for kindly reading the proofs". Malaviya had initiated the idea of a communal Hindu University at Benares. In this context Radhakumud's dedication of his tract is significant:

> To the Promoters of the Hindu University of Benares for their noble efforts towards the Conservation and Development of Hindu Learning and Culture in the Service of Humanity.

Mookerji brushes aside the positivistic position, which would later be espoused by Niharranjan Ray:

> It is generally recognised and admitted on all hands that this Indian unity is largely, if not solely, the creation of the British rule, a bye-product of the Pax Britannica, the inevitable outcome of a centralised administration which controls the whole country from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. What is not generally known and recognised, however, is that the idea of this fundamental unity is much older than British rule, that it is not a recent growth or discovery but has a history running back to a remote antiquity.[15]

He starts his tract with a philosophical assumption about the immanent superiority of Indian unity over its apparent diversity:

> The fact is that the geographical unity of India is apt to be lost sight in her immensity and variety [then follows a lucid classification of the geographical and cultural variety].... Superficial observers are therefore liable to be bewildered by this astonishing variety in Indian life and geography. They lack that power of perception which dives beneath appearances and externals and sees into the life of things. Thus they fail to discover the One in the Many, the Individual in the Aggregate, the simple in the composite. With them, the whole is lost in the parts, the parts are greater than the whole as in the old adage of blind men 'seeing' the elephant. The fact is that an exclusive dependence upon mere sense-impressions mere sense-contact with external phenomena cannot carry us very far: for the senses cannot take us beyond the apparent and the objective. What is needed is the superior interpreting, integrating, synthesising power of the mind that instead of being overpowered by the multitude of details will master them and rise above them to a vision of the whole.[16]

This explicitly Advaitavādin position would later be made more widely known among Congress nationalists (not least of all in Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi's historical view of India as a whole) by the Ramakrishna Mission, and by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. It emphasized Hindu unity and relegated cultural diversity in a spiritualist/materialist set of domination/subor-

diration paradigms. From it stemmed Radhakumud's nomenclature of Bhāratvarsha for India, for which he consistently used endogenous and Hindu terms:

> Bhāratavarsha is the old, indigenous classic name by which India was known to the Hindus ... India was originally called Jambūdvīpa . . . even in the time of Asoka who, in Buddhist works, is often styled as the king of Jambūdvīpa . . . While the name Bhāratavarsha has a political reference conveying the idea that the whole of India was governed by a single king. ... Though (... these) were no doubt names applied to the region conquered or colonised by the Aryans, yet subsequent additions by conquest were also known by these general names, as accretions to the main land are known by the name of the latter.[17]

The "single king" according to Mookerjee, was a Purāṇic historical myth of conquest, consolidation and "ultimate renunciation of the world as an unreality in essence"

> Bhārata therefore stood before the multitudinous people inhabiting the country that was called after him as the embodiment, the representative, of the dominant Arya power which was fast accomplishing its work of colonizing the whole country and bringing its different parts under the unifying discipline of a common culture and civilization.[18]

India that is Bharat is grounded on this *mythic domination of diversity,* i.e., of what Mookerji calls "rich, manifold variety",[19] by unity.

Mookerji accepts Aryans as the first conquerors of the entire sub-continent, much earlier than the latest imperialists from Britain. To him:

Bhāratavarsha ... is another name for Aryanised India, the congenial fertile soil where Aryan culture planted itself and attained its fruition. ... And Bharata was held up as a convenient symbol, a comprehensible token of this early renaissance, of the conquest of a new cultural unity imposed upon and pervading a rich manifold variety, round which were gathered, as in a system of federation, different creeds, cults and cultures with liberty to each to preserve its own special features and genius and contribute its own quota to enrich the central culture.[20]

Here the central logic of Hindu cultural hegemony in new India today becomes explicit. Its factual status for the past can of course be challenged by later research on Lokāyata traditions of the dominated classes (on which Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya, the historian of philosophy and science in ancient India has presented data in his texts). But this centralizing logic does express the hegemonic thought of the synthesizing trend in the Indian national bourgeoisie; from the symbolist ideas of Rabindranath Tagore's *Bhāratavarsher Itihāsher Dhārā*[21] to present day conservative positions on culture and media presentations.

In fact Radhakumud Mookerji and Benoy Sarkar clearly expressed the modern theory of hegemonic ideology permeating the elements of social behaviour, before sociological communists like Antonio Gramsci wrote about such cultural matters. Mookerji footnotes the passage quoted above as follows:

As pointed out by Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, M.A. in his suggestive brochure on *The Pedagogy of the Hindus* this synthetic and complex Indian culture was the result of the Indian system of education which adapted itself to national requirements in all ages, and he argues: 'how otherwise can we account for the rise of the numerous Purāṇas, Saṃhitās, and Tantras adapted to the needs of the people in different ages and provinces?. . . . It was because of their mastery over the principles of Psychology and Sociology that the leaders of the community never neglected the superstitions, the mechanical rites and ceremonies, the diverse practices and usages and various religious customs and mythological notions obtaining in the country, but rather promoted the growth and development of a varied eschatology, a varied mythology and a varied religious systems according to the varied geographical and historical conditions of the people.[22]

This is not a positivist position like that of the liberal Niharranjan Ray, but a teleological 'whig' interpretation; one which lacks specific veracity, but has the power to demand belief. It represents a charismatic sociological vision, which goes past positivist history to the level of political ideology.

In a percipient Introduction to the volume this was pointed out not by an Indian but by a British Labour Member of Parliament, a good friend of Indian national aspirations, who would, about fifteen years later become Prime Minister of the National Government of coalition, which made the Communal Award for British India—J. Ramsay Macdonald in 1914:

> Mr. Mookerji writes only of history, but it is a history which we read with political thoughts in our mind. It is this history quickened into life which is giving us our Indian political problems. What share has the Mohammedan in it? Perhaps much greater than we think ... nationalism cannot be dissociated from liberal political ideas ... in my opinion, at any rate, the unity of India will not remain exclusively a Hindu conception, although its origin may be in Hindu culture.

Speaking of the "revivifying influence on culture" of "this Indian nationhood" Ramsay Macdonald spoke also of the Bengal School of Art, and of Santiniketan:

> ... how in this art the spirit of India is not merely Hindu. Mr. Tagore's (i.e., Abanindranath Tagore's) great painting "The Death of Shah Jahan" is as essentially Persian as his "Spirit of India" is Hindu. Moreover, in literature, are we not at present in the midst of a 'Gitanjali' pūjā—all unconscious that it is the refined expression of Indian nationalism.... Thus India awakes anew to a sense of independence and self-respect and only by such an awakening can she contribute her share to the culture of the world.[23]

It is notable that the liberal interpretation of Mookerji's concept of India still comes from a representative of British labour. But his own middle class Indian intelligentsia position was itself explicitly Indo-Gangetic at core and Hinduizing in its cultural connotation as befitted his faith in Benares Hindu University. It

was this Hindu-centricism which after the 1920s was to drive or facilitate Muslim middle class or petty-landlord politicians into the wiles of the "two-nation theory".

The Hindu idea of the semiotics of unity is seen throughout his book in the terms of geographical expansion—what Mookerji calls "The colonisation of the south" extending through the diffusion of Buddhist as well as Hindu symbols into south-east Asia, the initial study of which was being carried out rather simplistically at Santiniketan under Rabindranath Tagore's patronage by scholars like Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, and by members of the Greater India Society like Kalidas Nag, or by the eminent scholar of Kampuchean inscriptions Bijan Raj Chatterjee; the final summation of the data on what that generation called "Hindu colonies in the Far East" is in four volumes by Ramesh Chandra Majumdar. That expansion is instrumentalized by political imperialism. The rest of the tract on "The Fundamental Unity of India" is devoted to the statement about the basis of Indian nationalism being in the Hindu ideology of imperialism. It is hardly to be wondered at what Ramsay Macdonald, the future arbitrator of the Communal Award, should already have been scared enough to call for an evening of the balance in favour of Indo-Persian cultural community, for an even stress on Mughal as much as Bhāratīya imperialism as well.

What is interesting is that when the political semiotics of the Republic of India, that is Bhārat (as we call our nation-state in our Constitution) was evolved by men like Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, Tara Chand or Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, this was a mixture of Hindu and Indo- Persian ideology, closer to the first British Labour Prime Minister than to the Hindu historian. They changed the simplistic element in the concept of the "fundamental unity of India" into the more complex, but still essentialist doctrine of "unity in diversity".

Presumably, the late Niharranjan Ray, whose closeness to the late Indira Gandhi's ideology was well known, would have disagreed with an identification of such essentialist Hindu centralism with the secular ideology of Indian state power. But since 1976-77 the identification has several times been implied in Indian political ideology of the establishmentarian variety whether in the Congress or Janata conglomerates. The dichotomy between Bhārat and Pakistan that the Pakistani media (including its historians at one time, in the age of the late Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi and S.M. Ikram) were eager to emphasize during the era of the Indo-Pakistani wars and of the chauvinist populism of Z.A. Bhutto, a dichotomy which in the first thirty years of Indian independence the Indian intelligentsia sought to de-emphasise, at that time stressing cultural bonds at the popular, mass levels, this dichotomy, I repeat, has, since the period of the Janata Sarkar at the Centre and its unseaters the reformulated Congress-I, been greatly emphasized in national policies for defence, nuclear scientific strategy and media manipulation of popular solidarity with the central government.

The heritage of the eponymous hero Bharata in the Ikshvāku dynasty of Ayodhya, and of its greatest mythological scion, Rāma, has been resuscitated even on Doordarshan with all the connotations of popular abasement before a

leadership principle, explicated in the medieval connotations of Tulsi Das's *Rāmacharitmānasa* and its modern recensions. This leadership has been personalized in centralist, superordinate, and neo-dynastic format, even at the regional level in Andhra Pradesh or Thailand, as well as New Delhi, to a point where political choices can be seen in terms of central image– stability, while diversification of alternatives is supposed to create instability. Instability on the frontiers, continually brewing on at least three peripheries, is believed to be sufficient to keep the electorates, by and large, loyal to a centralized view of nationality. At this level, a segmentary element of historiography based on myth comes close to a politics based on manipulation of immense cleavages between literati- elites, and masses below poverty line. The linking role is played by forces of centralization.

It remains for us to consider what are the alternatives possible, keeping the national format intact. That will be the subject of another paper.

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Bihar Congress and the Agrarian Problem in the 1930s

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Agrarian unrest in modern Bihar can be traced back to the Permanent Settlement and the working of British colonial rule. The Permanent Settlement gave the *zamīndārs* and the intermediaries ample opportunities to fleece the tenants through rack-renting and innumerable illegal exactions which reduced them to a state of perpetual penury and indebtedness. Acute distress naturally bred deep discontent among them, but did not lead to organized protests mainly because of the lack of political consciousness among them. In the years following the Champaran satyagraha, peasant movement in Bihar began to take shape. But initially it was more concerned with the nationalist movement than with purely agrarian questions. The Congress used populist rhetoric to rally the peasants under its banner for the success of the nationalist movement. They responded enthusiastically when the Nagpur Congress (1920) gave them a call to participate in the Non-Cooperation movement. As a matter of fact, it was the peasants who constituted the real strength of this movement in Bihar.[1] Its mobilization of the peasantry was to widen its own mass base in the rural area and to pressurise the British through mass movement, but not to allow it to be used to end rampant feudal oppression. The Gandhian concept of 'social harmony' and 'mutual agreement and compromise' were the watch-words of the Congress for the solution of the agrarian problems.[2] The agrarian policy of the Congress was epitomized in what Gandhiji said during the peasant agitation in Avadh in 1920-21.

> Whilst we will not hesitate to advise kisans...to suspend the payment of taxes to the Government it is not contemplated that at any stage of non-cooperation we would seek to deprive zamindars of their rent. The kisan movement must be confined to the improvement of the status of the kisans and the betterment of the relations between the zamindars and them.[3]

The Congress Working Committee's advice (Bardoli, 1922) to the peasants to resume the payment of rents to the *zamīndārs* after the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation movement was quite in consonance with the policy of the Congress on agrarian questions.

The class harmony preached by the Congress was defended on the ground that the Congress was a broad multi-interest anti-imperialist front whose unity was to be maintained at all costs. What lay behind this not a very convincing

agrument, however, was the concern for safeguarding the vested interests of the landed classes. By no stretch of the imagination the *zamīndārs* as a class could be considered an anti-imperialist force. Their credentials as the bulwark of the raj had long been established beyond doubt, and the Congress was not unaware of where their loyalty and sympathies lay. There was a limit beyond which the multi-interest, non-class character of the Congress could not be pushed. The contradiction between the interests of the landlords and those of the peasantry was too fundamental to be wished away. The economic depression of the 1930s made this contradiction all the more acute when it came to be highlighted by the Kisan Sabha and the leftists. The political awakening acquired by the peasants through their participation in the nationalist movement and the activities of the Kisan Sabha and the socialists hightened their awareness of the nature of this contradiction. There were unmistakable signs of restiveness on their part to resist feudal oppression. Hence it was becoming increasingly difficult for the Congress to serve the landlords and the peasants simultaneously on the basis of the policy of 'social harmony'. The radicals and the Kisan Sabha legitimately argued that the Congress should justify its popular character by adopting a radical agrarian programme.[4] This demand for radicalization of the socio-economic programme of the Congress cannot be interpreted solely in terms of struggle for power or for the capture of the Congress by the socialists and the Kisan Sabhaites, as one would like to assume.[5] The demand in fact embodied a new conception of political economy which the radicals and the leftists envisioned for the country without which Indian nationalism appeared to them bereft of substance. It is true that there was an element of struggle for power in the conflict between the right and the left. The growing popularity of the Kisan Sabha among the peasantry must have caused some anxiety to the right wing in the Congress, for it was likely to erode their popular support in the countryside. But it needs to be stressed that the conflict had far deeper dimensions than mere struggle for power and position. Its genesis lay in the commitment to an ideology that went beyond the parameters of Gandhism and the official Congress policy.

The agrarian crisis in Bihar was greatly aggravated by the economic depression. The sharp fall in prices of crops made it impossible for the tenants to pay rents especially in those areas (Munger, Patna, Gaya) where produce rents had been commuted to cash rents at a very high level during the post-World War I years when the prices of crops had registered a sharp increase. Arrears of rent went on accumulating and non-payment resulted in eviction and auction-sale of tenants' holdings. The resumption of such holdings by *zamīndārs* and their conversion into *bakasht* lands led to acute tension and produced an explosive situation in the 1930s.

When this agrarian crisis seemed likely to flare up, particularly during the Civil Disobedience movement, the governor of Bihar initiated a poltical move designed to undermine the popular base of the Congress and further strengthen the alliance between the raj and the landed aristocracy. The move culminated in the formation of the United Party which could develop into a serious rival to

the Congress in the next elections.[6] The formation of this party coincided with a period when most important Congress leaders were behind the bars and the Congress itself was banned.[7] The United Party was nothing but a political platform of the Bihar Landholders' Association and the important calculation behind the party was to harm the electoral prospects of the Congress by weaning away the peasants through some paltry concessions by amending the tenancy law.[8] Rajendra Prasad, the tallest of the Congress leaders in Bihar, welcomed the emergence of this party and issued a press statement that if it "followed its avowed aims and objectives in its actual working, it would be to the good of the country".[9] But the radicals disagreed with Rajendra Prasad and decided to oppose the United Party's manoeuvre by activating the Kisan Sabha under Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, which had lain dormant during the Civil Disobedience movement. The Swami mobilized large numbers of peasants and conducted a powerful campaign to expose the true character of the United Party. The Kisan Sabha's opposition to the Tenancy Amendment Bill brought forward at the instance of the United Party forced the government to make some modifications in the proposed bill. But the amended act failed to even partially redress the grievances of the tenants. The concessions granted to them were merely illusory.[10]

After the Civil Disobedience movement, the agrarian scene in Bihar underwent a significant change. There was deep ferment in the peasantry and a powerful desire on their part to get rid of their oppressive burdens.[11] The political baptism the Kisans had received during the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience movements had made them more conscious of their rights than ever before and the sustained campaigns conducted by the Kisan Sabha and the socialists highlighting their misery made them assertive and vocal. The Congress could not afford to remain indifferent to this ferment if it had to retain its kisan base. It had to address itself to the grievances of the tenants and to do something to remove them. This assumed added urgency in view of the coming assembly elections, for large numbers of kisans had become voters under the Act of 1935. It was against this background that the Congress came to realize the need for a thorough change of the antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems to mitigate the sufferings of the peasantry. The Lucknow session of the Congress asked the Provincial Congress Committees to enquire into the conditions of the peasantry and report to the AICC to enable it to draw up an all-India agrarian programme.[12] Accordingly the Working Committee of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee set up the Kisan Enquiry Committee.[13] It was headed by Rajendra Prasad and included almost all the stalwarts of the Bihar Congress, namely, Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Shrikrishna Sinha, Bipin Bihari Verma, Ram Dayalu Sinha, Baldev Sahay, Vinodanand Jha, Ganga Sharan Sinha and Krishnaballabh Sahay. Of the nine members of the Committee Ganga Sharan Sinha, a socialist, alone can be said to have sympathy for the kisans. Sahajanand Saraswati was excluded from the Committee on the plea that his presence might not allow it to prepare a unanimous report.[14] The Committee drew up a detailed questionnaire separately on rent, illegal exactions, indebt-

edness, irrigation, floods, earthquake and miscellaneous.[15] The Enquiry Committee received whole-hearted cooperation from the Kisan Sabha, but the Landholders' Association generally ignored it. Khan Bahadur Md. Ismail, a substantial *zamīndār*, regarded it as nothing but a department of the Kisan Sabha meant to create troubles for the landlords.[16] This sums up the attitude of the landlords towards the enquiry.

The Committee visited only 43 places in various districts of the province. The enquiry conducted by it was of a very perfunctory nature. Nevertheless, the report brought to light horrifying details of the tyranny of the *zamīndārs* and the burden of mounting debt and illegal exactions under which the kisans were being crushed. The report was so damaging to the *zamīndārs* that the Congress decided not to publish it. The suppression of the report and the exclusion of Sahajanand Saraswati, the foremost champion of the kisan cause, from the Enquiry Committee show how sincere and honest the Bihar Congress was to solve the agrarian problem.

As was expected, many Provincial Congress Committees, including the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee, went to attend the Faizpur session of the Congress in December 1936 without the enquiry reports, which were to seve as the basis for the formulation of an all-India agrartian programme. But in view of the deepening agrarian crisis and growing militacny of the peasants, immediate relief could no longer be withheld from them. Consequently pending finalization of an all-India programme, the Faizpur Congress drew up a programme which was designed to give substantial relief to the kisans. It provided, *inter alia*, substantial reduction in rent, exemption of unecconomic holdings from rent, reduction of canal and irrigation rates, abolition of illegal exactions, fixity of tenure, moratorium on repayment of debt and liquidation of crushing burden of rural debt, wiping out the arrears of rent and recognition of peasant unions.[17]

The expectations of the peasants rose high when the Faizpur programme was given a prominent place in the Congress election manifesto.[18] The Congress legislators in the provinces were asked by the Working Committee to implement the Faizpur programme, especially in respect of substantial reduction of rent and revenue, imposition of agricultural income tax, fixity of tenure, relief from the burden of rural indebtendness and arrears of rent.[19] The agrarian legislation passed by the Bihar ministry during its tenure was, however, based not on the Faizpur programme, but on an agreement concluded after protracted negotiations between the Congress and the *zamīndārs*.[20] Rajendra Prasad from the Congress side and Kameshwar Singh, Maharaja of Darbhanga, C.P.N. Sinha and Shyamnandan Sahay from the *zamīndār* side were the chief negotiators. When after several rounds of negotiations the differences between the two sides on the nature and scope of the contempleted amendments to the tenancy act and of the relief given to the tenants could not be resolved, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was invited from Calcutta to intervene. It was through his good offices that divergent viewpoints were reconciled and the agreement was finally concluded. There is no evidence that discussions were held with kisans (or their real

spokesmen) before the agreement was finalized as claimed by Rajendra Prasad.[21] Shrikrishana Sinha, the Premier, was assured that since Azad and Rajendra Prasad were satisfied with the agreement, there would be no objection from Jawaharlal Nehru. Now that the *zamīndārs* had accepted the terms, the ministry was advised to have the legislation with their consent. In return for this consent, however, some important clauses of the proposed amendments favourable to the kisans were dropped.[22] The terms of the agreement were published in *The Searchlight* on 7 July 1938 together with statements by Maulana Azad, C.P.N. Sinha and Shyamnandan Sahay hailing the pact as standing on solid foundation.[23]It was ratified by the PCC on 31 July 1938, but Sahajanand Saraswati opposed it.[24] Ironically, the PCC endorsed the pact on the day, when lakhs of kisans were observing the Anti-Pact Week.[25]

The tenancy bill based on the Congress-*Zamīndārs* pact was denounced not only by the Kisan Sabha and the socialists; some Congressmen were also critical of it. It was therefore decided that the issue of the tenancy legislation be fortified by a statement by Rajendra Prasad. He wrote a lengthy note in defence of the legislation which claimed that the amended law was a substantial fulfilment of the Congress election manifesto and the Faizpur resolution.[26] The fact, however, was that the concessions allowed to the *zamīndārs* not only considerably diluted the Faizpur programme, but in many important respects even nullified it.[27] The departures made from the Faizpur programme were so great that even Rajendra Prasad, the author of the agreement, could not avoid a feeling of guilt:

> Speaking from the point of view of the large body of tenants and the government which are affected by the understanding, I feel, I have taken a very heavy responsibility on myself, and I have no doubt I shall come in for a great deal of criticism from not only the Kisan Sabha but the Congressmen in general and even perhaps from our High Command.[28]

In order to ease the acute tension prevailing in the province on account of the militant opposition to the tenancy law by the tenants led by the Kisan Sabha Rajendra Prasad advised the *zamīndārs* to stop realization of illegal exactions and other excesses committed by their *amlās* and ensure smooth passage of the pending bills in the Legislative Council.[29]

In fact the legislative and other steps taken by the Congress ministry did provide for reduction of rent, transfer right, measures against eviction and rural indebtendness, fixity of tenure, commutation of rent into cash, abolition of *begār* and restoration of certain categories of *bakāsht* lands to the tenants. But these measures were so circumscribed by the Congress-*Zamīndārs* understanding that it aroused great resentment not only among the kisans but in the Congress party also. It was attacked not only by the left-wingers but also by the moderate elements. The leadership was charged with having brought about such a one-sided settlement that it could not be defended before the public. Shrikrishna Sinha, the Premier, had to face 'angry and ugly meetings' as a result of which considerations of some amendments had to be put off. The situation was so tense

that Rajendra Prasad suggested to C.P. N. Sinha to find a way out by talking to the Premier and the finance minister.[30]

The Congress leadership was in a very tight corner. It was being sandwiched between the critics of the agreement on the one hand and the landlords on the other who were backing out of the settlement on some issues. One such major issue was the remission of the arrears of rent. The Faizpur resolution had explicitly stated that arrears should be wiped out, but the *zamīndārs* were not willing to accept it. Their attitude was so adamant that ultimately Rajendra Prasad had to climb down. Consequently instead of being completely wiped out, the arrears were to be treated on the same footing as other debts. Indeed the Congress was so anxious not to antagonize the *zamīndārs* that it conceded most of their demands in contravention of the declared Congress policy and programme. And Rajendra Prasad frankly admitted this:

> If the whole thing was published it would look that we had made no arrangement about even partial remission.[31]

If the authors of the agreement were themselves on the defensive, one can well imagine the reactions of the Kisan Sabha. The suppression of the Enquiry Committee's report and the pact with the *zamīndārs* without taking the Kisan Sabha into confidence made the Sabha highly suspicious of the ministry's intentions. Naturally, it decided to mobilize the kisans in various parts of the province to agitate for the fulfilment of the Faizpur programme and the promises made in the Congress election manifesto. In a lengthy press statement issued on 20 November 1937 Sahajanand Saraswati criticized the legislative measures of the ministry and said that "very little, almost nothing" had been done for the kisans. He accused the Congress of going back on the promises made to the kisans who had voted solidly for it. Underlining the importance of united front between the Kisan Sabha and the Congresss, the Swami asserted: "We don't want to embarrass the Congress Ministry. But then we don't want to liquidate ourselves".[32]

Sahajanand found the Bihar Tenancy Amendment Bill falling miserably short of even the most pressing and immediate needs of the peasantry. He did not see any difficulty in meeting the demands of the kisans when two-thirds members of the assembly had supported them. He was glad that the kisans were awakened to the sense of their duty and that it was no longer easy to befool them. Reminding the authorities of the numerous demonstrations and meetings held by the kisans in support of their demands, he threatened a mighty, but perfectly orderly and peaceful, demonstration when the assembly would reopen.[33]

Far from sympathizing with the agitating kisans, the Congress adopted a hostile attitude towards their legitimate demands. The militant postures of the kisans invited angry outbursts from Vallabhbhai Patel—the same Vallabhbhai who had exhorted the kisans of Bihar to fight for their rights a few years ago (1929), soon after the formation of the Bihar Kisan Sabha. He wrote to Rajendra Prasad that the Kisan Sabha would be a source of great trouble in the future, and that was why he had always been against its formation. He felt such rival

organizations would destroy Congress prestige and even might displace it eventually. That was the reason why he had given them no quarters.[34]

Taking a cue from their senior leaders Congressmen, while accusing the Kisan Sabha of encouraging violence, were themeselves trying to suppress the kisan movement by violent means. With lathis and spears in their hands they used to greet Sahajanand Saraswati with cries of 'go back'. There were attempts to break up Kisan Sabha meetings and assault kisan workers. For example, Congress people attempted to break up the District Kisan Conference at Laheriasarai, and in Benipatti a kisan worker was assaulted by the president of the thana Congress committee.[35] While all this was going on the Kisan Sabha, ironically enough, contiuned to regard the Congress as the supreme anti-imperialist national organization. The intensification of its movements was in response to the organized opposition of the *zamīndārs*, and was intended to acquaint the ministry with the real demands of the kisans and the intensity of their feelings.[36]

The *zamīndārs* were not far behind in their attacks on the Kisan Sabha. There was a spate of complaints from them against its activities. They charged Sahajanand Saraswati and his lieutenants with preaching class war, propagating the cult of *daṇḍa*, and inciting the tenants to acts of violence against the landlords. Many responsible Congressmen were also accused by them of making inflammatory speeches in kisan meetings and fomenting class conflict.[37] Ironically, these charges against the kisan workers were being made by those landlords who had unleashed a reign of terror against the tenants.[38] Congresssmen active in Kisan Sabha campaigns were charged with undermining Congress prestige by condeming the ministry and making personal attacks against Shrikrishna Sinha and Anugraha Narayan Sinha accusing them of playing into the hands of the *zamīndārs*.[39] The District Congress Committee and the Provincial Congress Committee were no less vehement in their denunciation of the Kisan Sabha and Sahajanand Saraswati. The Champaran DCC passed a resolution asking Sahajanand to cancel his tour in that district, for his speeches were creating undesirable effects on people's mind (*buddhibheda*). Similar resolutions were passed by the Munger and Saran DCCs banning participation of Congressmen in Kisan Sabha activities. The anti-Kisan Sabha tirade of the Congressmen appeared to aim at retrieving their position in the districts which had been weakened by vigorous Kisan Sabha campaigns on behalf of the tenants. This seems to have been one of the reasons why they were trying to tarnish the image of the Kisan Sabha by painting it as a disruptive force.

Sahajanand considered these prohibitions a denial of civil liberties and fundamental rights. He charged the DCCs with depriving Congress workers of the right to organize kisan sabhas granted to them by the Karachi and Faizur resolutions. He felt the action was deliberately designed to cripple the activities of the Kisan Sabha, and made a strong protest to the Congress President against the ban.[40] Nevertheless, the BPCC Working Committee approved the resolutions passed by the three DCCs. Sahajanand Saraswati did not attend this meeting. The BPCC resolution approving the action of the DCCs accused the

Kisan Sabha of creating a 'poisonous atmosphere' by its propaganda attacking the principle of *ahiṃsā*, the cherished creed of the Congress. [41] The BPCC instructed Congressmen not only to stop active involvement in the activities of the Kisan Sabha but also to refrain from passive association with it.[42] Rajendra Prasad held Congressmen working in the Kisan Sabha responsible for creating a situation fraught with 'dangerous potentialities' by their unjust criticism of the Congress programme and the ministry.[43] This caused a strong resentment among the kisan workers and led to disturbances in the province, especially in Gaya, Patna, Munger and Muzaffarpur districts.[44] An important item on the agenda of the CWC scheduled to meet on 2 January 1938 at Bombay was the resolution of the BPCC against the Kisan Sabha. Rajendra Prasad was sure that the BPCC would be in the position of the accused before the CWC. Hence he prepared himself to face the situation with adequte defence. He obtained all the incriminating evidence against the Kisan Sabha activists from the PCC office, and asked Shrikrishna Sinha to give him more materials from CID reports against prominent Kisan Sabha leaders, particularly Sahajanand Saraswati, Jadunandan Sharma, Kishori Prasanna Singh, Ramnandan Mishra, Dhanraj Sharma, etc. before he left for Bombay.[45] He also asked Anugraha Narayan Sinha to give him a report of objectionabe speeches delivered by kisan workers at meetings which he (Sinha) attended.[46] Even Gandhiji seemed to be falling in line with the Bihar Congress which was out to discredit the Kisan Sabha. Mahadev Desai conveyed Gandhiji's wish to Rajendra Prasad to publish the evidence in his possession proving the Kisan Sabha workers' connection with anti-Congress or violent activities.[47] Acting with a vindictive motive, the ministry pursued a repressive policy to crush the Kisan Sabha movement. Kisan leaders and workers were implicated in criminal cases. Even men of the standing of Jadunandan Sharma, Rahul Sankrityayana and Ramanandan Mishra were accused of theft u/s 379 I.P.C.[48] The All India Kisan Sabha noted with regret that in spite of its strict adherence to peaceful methods, charges of violence had been levelled against its workers and assaults made on the peasant fighters including women as in Chitautli in Saran district.[49] Sahajanand Saraswati emphatically denied the charge of advocating class war and bloody revolution. What he preached, he asserted, was a revolutionary change of the existing social order, and not a war of extermination against the landlords and capitalists:

> As regards the class war against landlords and capitalists, it is absolutely wrong. I never preached and cannot preach war against any human being howsoever wicked and tryrannical he may be and I do not want revenge even for the past tyrannies and misdeeds as I believe that it is not the man with whom the fault for these lies, but it is the present society and the private ownership of land and wealth which is responsible for all these errors and troubles. If therefore by class war is meant the war against *zamīndāri* and capitalism I plead guilty and am most willingly ready for the consequences.[50]

He reaffirmed his commitment to the Congress and was ready to strengthen it, but at the same time he wanted the vested interests to quit it.[51]

This harassment, persecution and the campaign of vilification against the Kisan Sabha workers were in flagrant violation of the instructions given by Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President, to all Congressmen and PCCs. Dwelling on the relationship between the Congress and peasant organizations, he stressed the importance of cooperation between the two which he regarded as essential for the solution of the agrarian problem. He was quite aware of the dynamics of the agrarian situation and wanted the Congress to be in direct contact with the peasantry. He advised the Congressmen not to shut their eyes to the 'ferment' among the peasantry sweeping the country. He was in favour of maintaining cooperative and friendly relations with the Kisan Sabhas and asked Congressmen to belong to them in large numbers. But at the same time he warned against use of the Kisan Sabha platform for criticizing the Congress and obstructing its work. He wanted both the Congress and the Kisan Sabha to exist separately, but without rivalry. His circular of 10 July 1937 to PCCs asked them to cooperate with genuine peasant organizations and considered it their primary duty to make the Congress in the rural areas as nearly a kisan organization as possible, othewise the living touch with the peasantry might be lost.[52] But the diehards in the Bihar Cogress do not seem to have bothered at all about these instructions.

The chasm between the principles and policies of the Congress and the Kisan Sabha had become so sharp and irreconcilable that Sahajanand Saraswati was compelled to resign from the Working Committee of the BPCC. The letter of resignation contains Swamiji's exposition of the right of using *daṇḍa* in self-defence. This he asserted was the only way by which he could infuse the spirit of self-defence and self-reliance in the kisans to meet the tyranny of the *zamīndārs*.[53]

Awadheshwar Prasad Sinha, Secretary, Bihar Kisan Sabha, forcefully and angrily asserted that the ministy had merely tinkered with the antiquated and oppressive land laws which it had been enjoined to overhaul in terms of the Faizpur programme. He accused it of bungling with the *bakāsht* problem by proposing a legislation which would not restore all the lands of the kisans under their cultivation.[54] Sahajanand, too, who was never consulted about the agrarian measures despite assurances from the Congress leadership, was equally vehement in his accusation of the ministry for deceiving the kisans.[55]

It was not the Kisan Sabha alone which was critical of the ministry for its failure to solve the acute agrarian crisis of the province. Even independent observers found widespread criticism of the many lapses in its functioning. Murli Manhar Prasad, editor of the widely circulated daily, *The Indian Nation*, saw how the tenancy legislation, dragging on indefinitely killed the psychological effect it might have had on the people. The ministry's prevarication, retreats, and compromises lost it the 'universal goodwill' with which it had begun and led to a 'growing revulsion of feeling against it'.[56]

A confidential report sent by Vallabhbhai Patel to Rajendra Prasad is a bitter indictment of the working of the ministry. It accused it of bungling the agrarian problem. In its opinion, the understanding with *zamīndārs* was ill-omened and

the legislation based upon it still worse. While doing no good to the kisans, it helped to hasten the ruin of petty-landlords. It regretted that the authors of the agreement did not take the kisans and petty landlords into confidence, as a result of which, except for the big landlords, the ministry had friends neither among the kisans nor among the smaller landlords. It found the ministry incapable of solving the *bakāsht* problem which had assumed serious proportions. It censured the ministry for resorting to repression of the kisan workers and considered lathi charge on peaceful women strikers in Patna and handcuffing of Rahul Sankrityayana scandalous.[57]

A review of the two years in office of the Congress ministry noticed increased agrarian unrest, greater discontent and greater friction between the landlords and the tenants than ever before.[58] Evidently, the relief measures taken by the ministry and the settlement of the *bakāsht* disputes by the Conciliation Committee headed by Rajendra Prasad had left the kisans so deeply dissatisfied that agrarian tensions and clashes continued till the ministry lasted. In view of this it is too much to say that 'on the main amendments to the tenancy law a satisfactory settlement was reached among the *zamīndārs*, the kisans and the government', as a result of which the tenants were able to 'reap the advantage of the new law almost immediately'.[59] On numerous occasions, the police repression of the peasant movement was as brutal and blatant as under the raj. At many places in Gaya, Patna, Munger and Champaran districts, mounted military police was sent to deal with the peasants including women offering satyagraha against eviction and for restoration of *bakāsht* lands.[60]

On the other hand, the benefits to the *zamīndārs* from the agrarian legislation of the Bihar ministry were so substantial that they began to talk of a national Congrees-*Zamīndār* agreement. The All-India Landholders' Conference held at Lucknow on 8-9 April 1939 in fact passed a resolution to negotiate an understanding with the Congress on an all-India basis. When some *zamīndārs* opposed this resolution on the ground that as a result of the Bihar compromise the rights and privileges of the *zamīndārs* were being 'butchered', C.P.N. Sinha came forth to defend the agreement with the Bihar Congress. Appreciating the reasonableness of the Bihar government he observed that some concessions secured by the *zamīndārs* in Bihar were such that no other government would have allowed.[61] He therefore advised the *zamīndārs* not to blame the Congress and observed: "In this country the danger was from socialism and not from the Congress".[62]

The foremost *zamīndār* of Bihar, the Maharaja of Darbhanga, had rightly perceived that the Congressmen running the government in provinces wanted adujstment and peace, and this suited the interests of the *zamīndārs* nicely. He admitted the existence of differences with the Congress in matters of detail, but he ruled out any disagreement in so far as the general policy was concerned. Constituting a minority interest, the Maharaja felt, the *zamīndārs* could not afford to fight. But he was confident that so long as the group following the direction of Mahatma Gandhi ruled in the Congress, and the socialists and

communists were kept in check, the *zamīndārs* need not have to take that extreme step [fight].[63]

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31. Ibid., (Rajendra Prasad to Ram Dayalu Sinha, 7.12.37).
32. Rajendra Prasad Correspondence, op. cit., I, Appendix no. 30, pp. 297-300.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., I, p. 103. (Vallabhbhai Patel to Rajendra Prasad, 20.10. 37).
35. AICC File, G-98/37. (Ramnandan Mishra to Rajendra Prasad, 17.1.38).
36. Ibid., (Bihar Provincial Kisan Council's resolution of 2.11.37. explaining the position of the Kisan Sabha *vis-a-vis* the Congress).
37. Ibid., (Rajendra Prasad to Jawaharlal Nehru, 11.12.37); Rajendra Prasad Correspondence, op. cit., Appendix no. 23, p. 290 (extract from the resolution of Central Zamindars' Association, Patna, 16.7.37).
38. AICC File, G-39/1938 (*Kisan Bulletin*, Bombay, 2.9.38; K.K. Sharma, op. cit., pp. 141, 169, fn. 87.)

39. Rajendra Prasad Correspondence, op. cit., I, p. 120, Appendix no. 23, pp. 302, 306-10.
40. AICC File G-98/1937 (Sahajanand to Jawaharlal Nehru, 28.11.37).
41. *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, 16.12.1937.
42. AICC File G-98/1937 (text of the BPCC Working Committee resolution).
43. *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, op. cit.
44. Rajendra Prasad Correspondence, op. cit., I, p. 147 (Rajendra Prasad to Vallabhbhai Patel, 21.12.37.)
45. Ibid., p.149 (Rajendra Prasad to Shrikrishna Sinha, 22.12.37).
46. Ibid., p.151 (Rajendra Prasad to Anugraha Narayan Sinha, 24.12.37).
47. Ibid., p.152 (Mahadev Desai to Rajendra Prasad, 25.12.37).
48. Ibid., III, p. 381 (Resolution on Bihar ministry passed at the Gaya session of the All India Kisan Conference held on 9-10 April 1939.
49. Ibid., p. 383.
50. AICC File G-40/1938 (*Kisan Bulletin*, Bombay, 22.4.38).
51. Ibid.
52. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, VIII, pp. 418-24 *passim*; N.N. Mitra, ed., *The Indian Annual Register*, 1936, I, New Delhi, 1990, p. 256.
53. *Kisan Bulletin* issued by the All-India Kisan Sabha, Bombay, 14.1.38; Sahajanand, op. cit., pp. 508-10.
54. See Awadheswar Prasad Sinha, "Relief to Zamindars", *The Congress Socialist*, 27.8.1938.
55. Sahajanand, op. cit., pp. 486, 488-89 and 490.
56. Rajendra Prasad Correspondence, op. cit., II, p. 275.
57. Ibid., III, pp. 174-89 (Enclosure to Vallabhbhai Patel's letter of 17.7.39 to Rajendra Prasad).
58. Ibid., IV, p. 229.
59. Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography*, pp. 458-59.
60. See Sahajanand, op. cit., pp. 511-24; Fortnightly Reports from November 1937 till the ministry quit office are replete with reports of agrarian tensions and clashes between the landlords and the peasants in various parts of the province. See, e.g., Home Poll., File nos. 18.11.1937, 6.12.1937, 18.12.1937, 8.1.1938, 18.2.1938, 18.3.1938, 13.5.1938, 6.6.1938, 18.6.1938, 5.7.1938, 18.7.1938, 18.8.1938, 18.9.1938, 18.11.1938, 18.12.1938, 16.1.1939 (National Archives of India, New Delhi).
61. Walter Hauser, op. cit., p. 64.
62. N.N.Mitra, op. cit., 1939, I, pp. 403-5.
63. Ibid., p. 396 (Maharaja's presidential address at the first session of the All-India Landholders' Conference held at Lucknow on 8-9 April 1939).

25

Manu and Contemporary Indian Ethnography*

KUMAR SURESH SINGH

Manu, by far the best known codifier of laws of the ancient period, has exercised a profound influence on social history, on the course of Indian ethnography, particularly on colonial and Indian ethnographers and other social scientists, as also on social activists who have lambasted him. He has pojected a profile of ethnography which needs to be reassessed in the light of the findings of ethnography, particularly those under the People of India project (POI), 1985-92, undertaken by the Anthropological Survey of India. In doing so, we may discuss the salient features of Manu's society, reconstruct his impact on ethnography, and evaluate his description of his society *vis-a-vis* the Indian society as it is projected by ethnography. A comparison of the two works, separated by two thousand years, is necessary to show not only continuity and change, but also to explicate, understand and clarify social processes.

As is known, Indian society is characterized by both division and hierarchy. Manu propounds the ideology of the division of the society into *varṇas* which he has plaçed in an order of hierarchy. Many of Manu's notions such as *varṇa* and *varṇasaṃkara* were rooted in ancient texts and go back even to an earlier period. The historians have traced the origin of *varṇa*, and its evolution into *jātis* from the Vedic period onwards. These notions were not unique to the brāhmaṇical system, but were shared by the Buddhist and Jain systems. So was the notion of *karma varṇasaṃkara*, of devience from work ethic. The notion of hierarchy again is common to all societies, and is present in an incipient form even in the tribal society of today. The notion of differential reward and punishment for the same offence according to one's placement in the order of hierarchy is similarly ubiquitous. What lends significance to Manu, more than to any other codifier of laws, is that he and his school of codifiers systematically expound their social philosophy, uphold brāhmaṇical supremacy, seek to instil a sense of degradation through the concept of *varṇasaṃkara*, and perpetuate inequality. Manu's notion of *varṇa* and *varṇāśrama* and many of the rituals (*saṃskāra*) remain crucial to the brāhmaṇical regulation of Hindu society.

We shall now briefly discuss the salient features of Manu's society which seem to be important from anthropological point of view. Manu recognizes diversities. He enjoins respect for the gods and brāhmaṇas of the conquered country (VII. 201), and for the laws and customs of the inhabitants (VII. 203).

The ethnographic world of Manu has four distinct categories of communities (See Appendix). The first is the territorial category of communities living on

the borders or on the fringes of Manu's Āryāvarta such as Āndhra, Draviḍa, Darada, Kirāta, Śaka, Yavana and even Aṅga and Vaideha, Secondly, there are *jātis* with distinct occupations such as the artisan groups of carpenters, weavers, tailors, etc. Thirdly, there are the people of the four *varṇas*. Fourthly, there are communities particularly of the mixed origins which stand outside *varṇa* system. There are in all about 100 of such communities.

The ethnographic world of Manu was relatively small in terms of its geography. Manu speaks of Brahmāvarta lying between two divine rivers Saraswatī and Dṛṣadvatī (II.17), Madhya Deśa lying between the Himavata and the Vindhya to the east of Prayāga (II.21) and Āryāvarta lying between the two mountains and extending as far as the eastern and western oceans (II.22). Two thousand years after Manu, the data generated by the POI project put the number of communities with all other territorial segments and subgroups at 4635. There are in addition nealy 65000 segments such as *gotras*, clans, and lineages, synonyms, surnames and titles. The ethnographic universe is no longer confined to the Āryāvarta or Madhya Deśa, but to the whole of Bhārata, a concept which crystallized about 300 years after Manu. The Āndhras, Bihārīs (Māgadhas) are known today as linguistic and territorial groups in the regions other than their own. *Varṇa* is not found to be ubiquitous as Manu would like us to believe, and there is much greater flexibility about the perception and placement of *jātis*. Social mobility is far more dynamic than the rigid laws of Manu postulated.

Like all such lists of communities given in the other Sanskrit works, Manu's list is a mix of what may in the present parlance be called *varṇa* and *jāti* categories, territorial and ethnic categories of people. Manu projects essentially the ethnographic world of north India, particularly north-west India, and generally of caste, economic roles of communities, of hierarchy and stratification. Manu focuses on the textual notion of the kinship system of the north, particularly the north-west, but ignores village exogamy of this area. He ignores the entire world of consanguinity of the south, central and western India.

Manu describes *varṇa* as a homogeneous category. It appears that while in the case of the brāhmaṇas he describes segments like ritually high placed *śrotriyas*, *upādhyāyas* (teacher), *ācāryas*, etc., he does not seem to be aware of the extent of differentiation based on territory and status in the case of other *varṇas*. The kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras are treated as monolithic which they were not. In fact, Manu deals in the same amorphous way with various other territorial categories like the Āndhras, Draviḍas, Māgadhas, etc. This raises a question. The populations of India out of which emerged *varṇa* and later *jātis* have been described as more or less a homogeneous mixture. This position is not accepted today as evidence is accumulating to suggest the existence of a variety of population groups which entered India from time to time. Some of these groups maintained their identity while others lost it. The processes of both fusion and fission have been at work. Larger territorial categories such as Ābhira, Gurjara, etc. broke up into occupational *jātis*. Much the same process can be seen at work among the Meenas, Gaddis, Pangwals, etc. even today. There was also the countervailing process of fusion of smaller groups forming

part of a larger whole. Caste was a cluster of endogamous *jātis* which were some times genetically different population groups; groups and subgroups, clans, *gotras* and lineages, merged to form larger categories in many cases.

Probably the best known dimension of Manu's schema is the theory of *varṇasaṃkara*. The notion of purity of *vaṃśa* and the need to maintain it had emerged in the post-Vedic period. Arjuna in the *Bhagavadagītā* which antedates Manu's work by almost 300 years expresses his sense of horror at the desecration of his *kula* with the rise of *varṇasaṃkara*, if he killed his kinsmen in the battlefield. It appears that Manu with the concept of *varṇasaṃkara* tries to resolve the problem of the placement of those communities which he cannot fit into the *caturvarṇa* system. Therefore, he propounds the theory of *varṇasaṃkara* to account for those who are supposed to be the progeny of the people belonging to one or both of *varṇas* but have no place in it. The theory of *varṇasaṃkara* could be looked at as an attempt to place at lower level these people supposedly born of hypergamous and hypogamous relationships among the members of *varṇas* and also from an ideological point of view as an attempt to understand the biocultural structure of the society in its entirety existing in the time of Manu. There was obviously an attempt to instil a sense of inferiority among those people because they had been assigned a lowly position. The *varṇasaṃkara* categories certainly stood outside the *cāturvarṇya* system.

There is a biological dimension to the theory of *varṇasaṃkara*. While Manu is emphatic about the purity of the *varṇas*, he elaborates on the structure and processes of the *varṇasaṃkara*. In fact both *varṇa* and *varṇasaṃkara* categories encompass a range of biological variations, as the structure of most of the Indian populations, suggests even today. Manu, in spite of laying down a stringent code of conduct and social norms, recognized resilience in mating and marriage practices. He recognizes the limited degree of *niyoga* for the purpose of continuing a lineage. He mentions both hypogamy and hypergamy as existential practices, even though the later is not favoured. Manu probably could be acutely aware of biological mixing of the peoples in his days.

Many scholars have read racism into Manu's notion of *varṇa* and *varṇa-saṃkara*. However, such was the influence of Manu's writing on ethnography that the upper crust of the Hindu society made up of the brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, etc. was identified with the Caucasoid stock, and the lower categories of the populations were supposedly derived from the Australoid. Even in popular folklore, a brāhmaṇa was expected to be fair complexioned, tall and sharp-featured. H.H. Risley discovered another racial category called the Dravidian which was later found to be as a linguistic and not a racial category.[1] But much harm had been done. The racial Dravidian theory provided grist to the separatist mill and the brāhmaṇas in Tamil Nadu were regarded as belonging to a different racial stock. It was much later that the physical anthropologists found the brāhmaṇas of Tamil Nadu to belong to the same gene pool as the non- brāhmaṇa populations of the state or at least closer to them rather than to their mythical ancestors from the North or the West.

Some anthropologists still continue with the theory of racial identification[2] even though it has been discarded. From 1950 onwards, there has been an explosion of information on the biological heterogeneity of Indian populations, which strikes at the root of the concept of caste as a gene pool and of *varṇa* as a racial category. It is now established that an ethnic identification of people of India at an all India level is not possible. There are significant differences in the anthropometric and genetical profiles among populations inhabiting different regions.[3] In fact, as biological studies of Indian populations today suggest, most of the people of India are highly mixed in terms of morphological and genetical traits. The anthropologists tell us that variation in such traits, which are a result of mixing of peoples, is more within a community than between communities. There is a clustering of such traits at regional level shared by most of the communities within a region.

The theory of *varṇa* and *varṇasaṃkara* influenced the ethnographic tradition both in the pre-colonial and the colonial phase. Those who wrote on Hindu society such as Alberūnī and Abu-l Faẓl took note of *varṇa* system. In the colonial period the ethnographers, many of them steeped in oriental tradition, have taken literally Manu and his theory of *varṇa* and *varṇasaṃkara*. There was an attempt to foist the theory of *varṇasaṃkara* on many communities, placed low in social hierarchy. Works in local languages were written based on the *Manusaṃhitā*. One such book quoted by Risely was *Jāti Prakash* which reproduces the *Manusaṃhitā* in the context of Bengal society. In fact the *Jāti Purāṇas* and works of this genre continued to bear the impact of Manu's ideas on *varṇa* and *varṇasaṃkara*.

However, it was during the ethnographic survey of communities of India from 1885 onwards that attempts were made to explore Manu's ideas on *varṇasaṃkara*. A scrutiny of this material presents an interesting pattern. It was in eastern India, where the survey was conducted by Risely, himself a great scholar and orientalist, that the theory of *varṇasaṃkara* was located among the largest number of communities who traced their origin to the mixing of castes such as caṇḍāla, namaśūdra, dhobā, dhānuk, kaibarta, etc. As one moved to the western, central and southern India, the number of such people invoking their mixed origin became fewer.

In course of the generation of data for the POI, we came across only a few examples of the communities recalling their origin from the mixing of *varṇa* categories. Such self-perception would reflect partly the textual material and partly the process of sanskritization at work among them seeking to establish their linkages with the communities placed above. The *Jāti Purāṇas* are replete with instances of mixed origins within the higher *jātis* to explain internal hierarchy and gradation. There are stories of brāhmaṇas, such as a section of Modh brāhmaṇas of Gujarat, who married girls from the lower order, and preserved their *jāti*, even though they were placed at a lower level.

As one goes through the *Manusaṃhitā*, one gets the impression that Manu is concerned more with norms which are evidently connected with ideology rather than with behaviour, that he is far too concerned with constructing a

conceptual framework than with social reality. In the process he reconstructs a social reality. There are reasons to believe that the society like any other society with which Manu was concerned was only less heterogenous than our society today. The brāhmaṇas, described as a homogenous lot, as a *varṇa*, have as many as more than 120 *jātis* today. The kṣatriyas who have all but disappeared are invoked by a number of communities, particularly the Rajputs, who control land and apparatus of power in many parts of the country. There has been a great deal of social mobility among the śūdras and vaiśyas today. In fact Manu himself recognizes the possibility of social mobility in terms of the possible transformation of a śūdra into a brāhmaṇa. The Census data (1872-1941) reveal the extraordinary range of mobility in society, the changing perceptions of the *varṇa* categories about themselves and about their relationship with others, the attempts by their segments to move up the social scale and so on.

It is interesting to note that even the most savage aspect of Manu's injunctions, namely, those relating to stringent punishment to be meted out to the śūdras, caṇḍālas, etc., is found to exist even today. For example, the Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh has different grades of punishment to be awarded for the same offence committed by different segments of populations, hierarchically placed in their society, such as the royalty/nobles, forming the upper crust who get away lightly whereas the commoners are punished heavily.

Manu seems to have ignored and even underestimated the processes of mobility in a social system and the fact that a community is vibrant, and an ever moving entity. The caṇḍālas have been projected by Manu and others as the original men living outside the main village settlements, despised and held in contempt, practising a range of occupations such as removing carcass, making baskets, etc. Risely cites the description given by Manu and various other authorities of the caṇḍālas who ate carrion and dressed differently. He further states that the caṇḍālas of Bengal called themselves namaśūdra but again distinguishes between the higher division of this caste and the lower one who were called caṇḍāla by the first and who in turn applied the name to the Ḍom. Risley describes the then occupation of these people as boating and cultivation. At the time he gave the synchronic view of the caṇḍālas, the namaśūdras in fact were rapidly moving forward in a spectacular manner. They were emerging as one of the two dynamic peasant communities, the other being the Rajbanshis. They even aspired to the status of the brāhmaṇa and procured a *vyavasthā* to that effect.[4] In course of the ethnographic survery of the nineteenth century, the caṇḍālas were discovered only in Bengal and Orissa. A small group of people still identify themselves as caṇḍāla in Orissa. Our study of the caṇḍālas also shows that, while they are placed low, they have not been a static category. They are a dynamic people engaged in a variety of occupations as peasants, agricultural labourers, pisciculturists, etc., and are involved in an effort to achieve a higher social status which has not been without success. The namaśūdras are today an upwardly mobile, economically dynamic and an important segment of the rural community in Bengal.

Manu's description of the brāhmaṇas is also far too idealized. The brāhmaṇa has been described as the lord of all castes, the highest on èarth, the lord of all created beings, the custodian of the sacred law (I.99). He alone can teach and cannot take up any job other than that of a preacher, And yet, he does not deny the possibility that the sons of a brāhmaṇa could be engaged in a profession which is unworthy of a brāhmaṇa. Such a formulation of brāhmaṇical roles does not take into account the compulsions of an agratian economy, of the role of market, the network of larger relationships which casts the brāhmaṇa in roles other than those of a preacher or a priest. The brāhmaṇas founded kingdoms. The ethnographic data particularly those collected under POI project shows that they are widely involved in agriculture as peasants, in public services, in industry including leather industry, trade and moneylending. In fact there has been a sharp decline in recent years in the role of a brāhmaṇa as a priestly class. They are not the dominant community in many parts particularly in the west and even within the brāhmaṇas, such as Nāgar and Anavil, the priestly segments are placed lower than the agriculturists and traders, even though their ritual superiority is generally conceded.

Manu enjoins the first marriage of the twiceborn men to be with women within equal castes but allows for subsequent marriages according to the order of the castes (III.13). He does not uphold monogamy but allows for polygyny. This is contrary to the fidings of the POI project which shows that a vast majority of the Indians are monogamous while 39.4 percent of the communities allow sororal and non-sororal polygyny. While Manu recognizes endogamy generally and insists that the sons should marry within their own *varṇa*, he, as mentioned above, deals with a number of possiblities as far as mating and marriage are concerned. He is however very clear that there should be no remarriage of a widow for the twiceborn. He permits *niyoga* with the brother-in-law or the *sapiṇḍa* of husband for one son, even junior levirate, (IX. 120) but does not seem to recognize senior levirate or polyandry, prevalent in many communities in northern India and elsewhere.

The entire thrust of his argument is in the direction of perpetuating the family or the lineage. For him the seed is more important than the field. The metaphor of seed and earth goes back to a period before Manu. It is interesting to note that this symbolism of biological reproducion and sexual relation of production which is a very old one is widespread in peasant and tribal societies in many regions of the country. It is related to patriarchal authority and patrilineal system. The children belong to father. The principle of patrilineal system regulates the right of succession, pattern of inheritance, etc. The women have only a right to maintenance. The woman is projected as an unequal partner in the process of human reproduction, which explains her subordinate role in the management of productive resources and household matters.[5] The POI project has generated an enormous amount of data on the low statuses and unequal rights of woman. In spite of women contributing significantly to family income through their participation in economic activities, their role in management of resources is

very small. Similarly, their role in religion and rituals is correspondingly less, except in matters of rituals which are exclusively mediated by women.

Manu upholds the patrilineal system. In matters of inheritance Manu does not seem to make any distinction between a son's son or a daughter's son. However mother's property can equally be shared by the uterine brothers, and maternal grandfather can make a gift to the granddaughter. Except for these vestiges of a possible matrilineal inheritance, Manu seems to be totally unaware of the matrilineal system. Today this system survives not only among the Khasis and Garo and cognate tribal groups of the North-east but also among the Tulu speaking communities in the South and in Lakshadweep Islands; matrilineal households reportedly survive in remote parts of Kerala. More widespread are the remnants of the possible matrilineal system spread all over central and southern India and elsewhere whereby the daughter inherits the movable property of the mother and the unmarried woman has a right to maintenance, etc.

Manu extols the merit of *kanyādāna*, the practice of the gift of the daughter but also allows brideprice. This is known as the *asura* right when bridegroom receives a maiden after having given as much wealth as he can afford to the kinsmen and to the bride herself according to his own will (III.31). The brideprice may also consist of a cow or a bull (III.27-29). The POI project reports the prevalence of brideprice among the tribal and a few other communities (15 per cent) and also a larger number of cases in which both dowry and brideprice are still paid (7 per cent).

Contrary to general impression, Manu provides for all kinds of food, vegetarian and non-vegetarian, for the sustenance of the vital spirits (V. 23-28). The meat has to be sprinkled with water and made holy with the recitation of *mantras*. He clearly states that "there is no sin in eating meat, in drinking spirituous liquor and carnal intercourse which is the natural way of creating human beings", but advocates total abstention, because it brings great rewards, and heavenly bliss (V. 56, 48-49). According to the finding of POI project the vegetarian account for 20 per cent of the communities even though a higher value attaches to vegetarianism.

The operative word in Manu's scheme of social division is *sapiṇḍa* which ceases only with the seventh person in the ascending and descending lines (V. 60) and *gotra* or *sagotra* which are brāhmaṇical concepts adopted by a number of non-brāhmaṇa communities. There are also any number of native categories of social division regulating particularly marriage, sex and kinship.

The various forms of relationships that Manu envisaged cut across the four *varṇas*. The POI project has yielded some data on hypergamous and hypogamous forms of relationship across *varṇas*. Such forms of hypergamy and hypogamy account for nearly 2 to 4 per cent of communities in the Himalayas particularly. Modern sociologists today speak of hypergamy and hypogamy not so much in terms of hypergamy and hypogamy across *varṇa* categories as in terms of hypergamy and hypogamy across segments within the same *jāti*. These segments are placed again in an order of hierarchy. They have a commensal but not an equal connubial relationship. An impressive documentation on this form

of relationship exists today. With the spread of education, improvement in economic condition, levelling up of the position of poorer segments within a caste which are becoming more equal sub-group endogamy is breaking up. Endogamy at the level of *jāti* or cluster of *jātis* (caste) is emerging. Caste is consolidating its position as a political entity.

Manu prescribes specific occupations for some of the communities (listed in the appendix). Of the rest, which are like generic categories he does not seem to know enough. Many anthropologists have found in the specification of such economic roles of *jātis* both the origin of *jātis* and their integration. As N.K. Bose says.

> If we read the Manusaṃhitā carefully, we see what pains were taken to define the exact occupation of different *jātis*. Every *jāti* had a particular occupation assigned to it; and we know from practice that they enjoyed virtual monopoly in it, this being guaranteed by public opinion, and in former times, perhaps by the State. The integrity of the economic organization was thus maintained intact. It is interesting to observe that *jātis* were permitted to change their occupation in times of distress; but more strictness was enjoined in regard to the trading and labouring castes than in the case of the ruling or priestly castes.[6]

Bose goes on to describe how the Juang after having taken to rope making *a la* Manu got integrated with the neighbouring society (through the mechanism of market).

The historians have delineated the processes of the transformation of *varṇa* into *jātis*, based on textual material, in which there are more references to *varṇa* than to *jāti*, the references to such *jāti* categories as *hīna jāti* being relatively few. Manu also describes fully *varṇa* and *varṇa* categories rather than the occupation based *jāti*. However, the study of *jātis* in recent years in terms of ecology and the close relationship of occupation to the resource endowment of a particular region raise some questions about this simplistic model of progression from *varṇa* to *jāti*. The data generated by POI project unveil the close relationship of *jātis* to resources and point to the possibilities of *jātis* rather than *varṇa* being the primary unit of social formation. The different eco-regions of India have their own hierarchy of *jātis* rooted in varying degrees of control over the resources and relationships of various *jātis* in the processes of control and exploitation of such resources.

Form this vantage point of social research, *varṇa* seems to be an imposition of the brāhmaṇical system as it gradually got established in different parts of India. It does not command the same degree of awareness and recognition in different parts of India. For instance, at the all India level 68.5% communities are aware of *varṇa* system and only 52.6 recognize it. Out of these only 7.8% place themselves as brāhmaṇas, 15.8% as kṣatriyas, 9.4% as vaiśyas and 29.1% as śūdras. There is an overlap in such perceptions. There is also an interesting pattern of regional variation.

There is yet another significant dimension to this. Social scientists have blown up *varṇa* system into an all India frame of reference within which different *jātis* from different parts of India relate themselves to one another. Communication and dissemination of information have also made this interaction possible. According to some scholars, the scheduled castes or at least some of them are outside the *varṇa* system.[7] Some of the scheduled castes call themselves Pañcama, or of the fifth *varṇa* in Andhra Pradesh. The POI data however show that a substantial number of the scheduled caste communities (70.2%) now place themselves as śūdra within *varṇa* system. Here again, regional variation has to be considered. Most of the scheduled castes in southern states and Madhya Pradesh consider themselves to be out of *varṇa* system. But, again, most of them in western and central and southern India place themselves within *varṇa* system. This could be due to the anti-brāhmaṇa movement and spread of Dalit ideology in the southern and central states.

A significant aspect of Manu's ethnography is that he provides for relaxation of commensal norms in times of famine and other social crises. The set of rules that Manu lays down form his concept of *āpaddharma*. However, it appears that these rules were not followed, in spite of the pandits invoking Manu, and the people were excommunicated for violating commensal norms. Those who were thus excommunicated merged to form a new caste, e.g., Chhatarkheya in the Orissa famine of 1986. This raises the question about the validity of Manu's prescriptions for times of crises. It appears that each community has its own set of commensal norms which is unique to it and which is integral to its identity. Therefore, any violation of the norms would invite excommunication, no matter how compelling was the circumstance for doing so.[8]

It is one of the paradoxes of the *Manusaṃhitā*, as it is of similar Sanskrit classics, that after having prescribed the most stringent, even savage forms of regulations degrading a substantial number of people and seeking to freeze them in a state of inequality, Manu proceeds towards the end of the book to describe the state of supreme bliss. He talks of the undifferentiated Self after having described the most differentiated forms of social organization and social norms.

> He who sacrifices to the self (alone), equally recognizing the self in all created beings and all created beings in the self becomes self-luminous (XII. 91).
> He pervades all created being in the five forms, and constanly makes them, by means of birth, growth and decay, revolve like the wheels (XII. 124).
> He who thus recognizes the self through the Self in all created beings, becomes equal (-minded) towards all, and enters the highest state, Brahman (XII. 125).

Of course such a state of realization is prescribed for only the twice born man but the spirit itself is all pervasive, equal towards all. It is this aspect of the *Manusaṃhitā* that was attacked by social reformers and activists. Mahatma Gandhi upheld *varṇa* system but rejected *jāti*. B.R. Ambedkar attacked both because they contained the seeds of inequality and injustice.[9] Copies of the *Manusaṃhitā* are burnt these days as ugly symbols of brāhmaṇism enshrined in

this work. In the process many positive features of Sanskritic culture, mediated by the brāhmaṇas and by others, are overlooked. With the Supreme Court upholding reservation of the Backward Classes, *jāti* has returned to the centre of the stage in administration and politics, where it always was in some form or the other. Therefore, a serious study is called for to understand highly complex societal and cultural processes attempted by works such as Manu's.

APPENDIX

List of Communities (Manu and POI)

1. Ābhīra	Cowherd/Ahīr
2. Ācārya	Priest, a teacher, a section of the brāhmaṇas/a synonym for the Acharaj brāhmaṇas of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, Achari used as a title of Sri Vaishanava Brāhmaṇa
3. Ahindika	Wanderer/Jogi
4. Ambaṣṭha	Medical-healers/a section of kāyastha
5. Āndhra	Those who live by slaughtering animals/ a territory/ Andhra people
6. Aṅgas	People of eastern Bihar
7. Antya, Antyaja	Untouchables/scheduled castes of the 'lowest order'
8. Antyavasāyin	One who ends up at the bottom, a class of untouchables, employed in burial grounds/ Kati Kapala/ Sudigadu Siddha
9. Apapātra	Caṇḍāla and Svapāka
10. Apasada/outcastes	'Base born offspring to Aryans'/scheduled castes
11. Ardhika/share-croppers	An occupational category
12. Astrologer	Joshi/Jyotish
13. Asur	A scheduled tribe
14. Avantya	Born of a Vrātya brāhmaṇa, they serve in war, inhabitants of western Malwa
15. Avrita	
16. Āyogava	A carpenter/Badhai/Barhai, Sutar, etc.
17. Barber	Nai/Napit/Valand, etc.
18. Bard	Charan/Bhatraju, etc.
19. Basket maker	Bansphor/Medarih, etc.
20. Bhriggakantas	Sorcerers
21. Blacksmith	Lohar/Kollan, etc.

22. Brāhmaṇa	More than 120 brāhmaṇa *jatis* are reported to exist today
23. Caṇḍāla	'Fierce, the paradigmatic untouchable', often used as the generic term for any untouchable; namaśūdra of Bengal/ caṇḍāla of Orissa
24. Cina	Tibeto-Burman communities/people of China
25. Coḷa	People from far South
26. Cuncu	'Notorious'/a group of people who live by slaughtering of animals that live in wilderness/a scheduled tribe of Andhra Pradesh
27. Daitya	Sons of Diti-Gods
28. Darada	Precipice dwellers, living near Peshawar/a community of Jammu & Kashmir
29. Dāsa	Slave
30. Dasyu	Alien, groups other than the brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdras
31. Dhigvana	Leather workers
32. Divākīrti	'Notorious by day, an untouchable caste', a term for a barber or for a particular group of untouchable leather workers/caṇḍālas
33. Draviḍa	Those from the Deccan and southern India, 'water carriers'
34. Eunuch	Hijda/Khojja/Pavaiya, etc.
35. Gandharvas	Musicians of the gods
36. Ghalla	Those who subsist by 'despicable occupations and those addicted to gambling and drinking, who are fencers with sticks or wrestlers and jesters'
37. Goldsmith	Swarṇakāra/Soni/Sonār, etc.
38. Jhalla	Pugilist/Jhetty/Mal, etc.
39. Kaivarta	Fishermen/Jalia Kaibartta of West Bengal, Assam, etc.
40. Kamboja	A territorial group
41. Kantala	
42. Karaṇa	Doer, scribes and accountants, spies/a section of kāyastha
43. Karavara	Leather worker/Chamar/Bhambi/Madiga, etc.
44. Karuśa	From a region called Karusha in western Bihar

45. Khasa	"Scab", water carriers, a community of the Himalayas
46. Kunku	Slaughterer of animals
47. Kirāta	Mountaineer/Mongoloid tribal communities
48. Kṣattar	Carver, also the name of the priest who carves up the victim in a Vedic sacrifice/ Baḍhai/Barhai, Sutar, etc.
49. Kṣatriya	Rajputs and other communities claiming to be Rajputs and recognised as such.
50. Kukkuṭaka	Wild rooster/scheduled tribes
51. Koda	
52. Madgu	Diver-bird/slaughterer of animals that live in the wilderness/ some of the scheduled tribes
53. Māgadha	Traders/people of Bihar
54. Maitreyaka	'Ring a bell at the appearance of dawn, and praise great men'
55. Malla	Wrestler/Jhetty/Mal, etc.
56. Mārgava	Seeker, a boatman also called Kaivarta, a sort of fisherman/Jalia Kaibartta
57. Matsya	The people inhabiting the tract comprising the doab from the neighbourhood of Delhi as far as Mathura
58. Meda	Those who live by slaughtering animals/- those who live outside the village
59. Mlechhas	Barbarians
60. Niṣāda/Hunter	Hunting and gathering communities/fisher-men
61. Naṭa	Dancer also used to work as spies/Nat
62. Telī	Oilman
63. Pahlava	A race, originally of kṣatriya descent, degraded to the condition of śūdras in consequence of their neglect of brāhmaṇas
64. Pañcāla	A territorial group/people from the doab area from the neighbourhood of Delhi to as far as Mathura/Panchal of western India, a generic group of five artisan castes
65. Pandusopaka	Worker in cane/Yata
66. Parada	Those who work in quick silvers
67. Parāsava	Those who save corpses, wood-cutters etc.
68. Pauṇḍraka	Sugarcane boilers, those who live in south Bihar and Bengal

69. Pukkasa	Those who live by catching and killing animals that live in holes/Musahar/ Valayan (Muppan)
70. Puṣpadha	
71. Rākṣasa	A human group, generally anti-Vedic, anti-brāhmaṇa.
72. Śaikha	Having a crest of hair
73. Śairandhra	Those who are skilled in adorning and attending on his masters/also live by snaring animals
74. Śaka	
75. Sātvata	Those who worship gods/temple priests
76. Sopāka	Puppy-cooker, those who dig up and sell roots that are fatal poisons, addictive drugs, used in malevolent magical rituals/gatherers, those who live by the occupations of his sire
77. Śrotriya	A division of brāhmaṇa/an upper Maithili brāhmaṇa group
78. Sudhanvan	
79. Śudra	A *varṇa* category, composed of a majority of communities
80. Surasenkas	A territorial group from the doab area from Delhi to Mathura
81. Sūta	Those who manage horses and chariots/ charioteer, also an oral poet, the traditional narrator of the epics and Purāṇas
82. Svapāka	Dog cooker, a term for a group of untouchables who removed the corpses of those who had no relatives, executed those who were condemned to death, etc.
83. Tailor	Darjee
84. Upādhyāya	A teacher/a surname among some brāhmaṇa *jātis*
85. Ugra	Catching and killing animals that live in holes/Musahars/Valayan (Muppan)
86. Vaideha	Of Videha, north Bihar
87. Vaikiks	
88. Vaiśya	A *varṇa* category, consisting of many trading communities as well as those communities who claim to be the vaiśyas
89. Vatadhana	Northern tribes, those who serve in war

90. Vena	Who use reeds, either as a musician or as a basket-maker, drum playing/some of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes/ Kunherukala (ST), a subgroup of Yerukula
91. Vijanman	
92. Vrātya	'Spies', mixed categories
93. Washerman	Dhobi/Dhobā/Chakali, etc.
94. Yakṣas	
94. Yavana	Greeks/Ionians

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